

He Speaks

by

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1. God is three in one.

God is three in one. Prophet, priest, and king. Israel, the church, and the nations. Three days and all will be complete in New Jerusalem. The key to understanding this is the phrase "hidden manna" in Revelation 2:17.

The first day of God's three days is Israel. Israel is front and center. In the background there is a remnant of the faith of Abraham. This remnant is the church within Israel. It is a holy remnant of true believers.

In the background of the first day is the nations. The nations are mentioned throughout the Old Testament but they are secondary to the history of Israel.

Israel receives God's word beginning with Moses and also through many other prophets from God. The history and chronicles of kings and dynasties, the rise and fall of the nation: all this is recorded by God's prophets in Israel. Israel is an instrument in God's hands to give the world his written word. They gave us the law and the prophets.

The first day is Israel and Israel is the prophet who receives and then proclaims God's name and God's word.

The history of Israel is unique in that all three roles of prophet, priest, and king are seen through men God chose for those roles.

In Hebrews 9:4 we see the three elements contained within the Ark of the Covenant. The stone tablets of the law represent Israel and the first of the three days of God. God is three in one. One ark: three elements.

As the Ark is one with three elements so are the people of God throughout history past, present, and future. The remnant within Israel, the church, and out of the nations in the millennium are the one people of God purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.

As there was an outward nation of Israel there is today an outward shell of Israel and the church. The nations exist continuously. On the third day when the kingdom promises are fulfilled we will see Israel, the church, and another remnant taken out of the nations.

It is good to be reminded of biblical history and how God reveals himself. There are lessons in the Old and New Testament to help us live victorious Christian lives.

2. Prophets

The first role which God reveals himself through is that of the prophet. In the first day of God's plan he reveals himself to us through Israel. Israel is a prophet. Israel gave us God's written word. The history of Israel is taken up with prophets, and the children of Israel are called the children of the prophets.

When I think of prophets I think of John the Baptist, Elijah, Elisha, and Moses. We know Abraham was a prophet though Abraham never wrote a book of "Thus saith the Lord" pronouncements. We know Job was a prophet. Their lives were prophetic by what God allowed to happen to them. Their lives foreshadowed and pointed to the Lord Jesus. A good example is Joseph.

God directed the lives of these men in different ways and communicated his word to us through them by example, by precept, by principle and by verbal utterance. All of this is recorded in the Bible.

God allows prophets to endure suffering at times. One reason for suffering is to teach the prophet spiritual lessons. Another reason is to teach God's people spiritual lessons on patience, humility and dependence on God for everything.

Prophets are in humble situations for their own sake, for the sake of their message, and also for the sake of the people their message is directed to. We can see this in Paul's life when he outlined the trials he endured for the sake of the gospel. (2 Corinthians 1:8-10)

Hebrews 11 lists the heroes of the faith. This list specifically notes that the circumstances in each person's life was different. Some people experienced great victory in their lives. Others suffered tremendous persecution and hardship. All were commended for their faith.

The lesson I see in Hebrews 11 is that a realistic interpretation of the doctrine of faith goes beyond a person's positive confession or positive mental attitude. Spiritual, godly people who have a good attitude and say the right things suffer tremendously and at the same time many wicked people who curse and make negative confessions live in prosperity. None of these external circumstances of wealth or prosperity are any true indication or an accurate gauge of a person's relationship with God. The book of Job makes this clear. The lives of the apostles and early Christians underline this. The book of James even declares that the poor are actually the ones who are rich in faith.

The book of James describes Job as an example of a suffering prophet. Job's experience and suffering was a message pointing to God. God revealed himself to us through the suffering of Job. (James 5:10-11)

Another prophet mentioned in the book of James is Elijah. Job is mentioned as an example of patience. Elijah is mentioned as an example of prayer. (James 5:17-18)

James uses these prophets in his letter as object lessons. This is the intention God has in choosing his prophets. He wants to reveal himself to us and to provide us with object lessons. Not only are the words of these God's prophets valuable but their lives contain lessons and truth. Their lives point us to God.

This is seen in the life of Abraham. The history of Abraham and his son Isaac are illustrations of the Lord Jesus. This is mentioned in Hebrews 11:17-19. This concise summary paints the picture of Christ for us.

The Old Testament contains a record of men whose lives point us to God. The words and the lives of these prophets are valuable in teaching us about the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is indeed the Prophet foretold by Moses. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

3. Scripture

Isaiah 8:19-20, "**And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**"

Jeremiah 23:22, "**But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.**"

Jeremiah 23:29, "**Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**"

God gave Israel the honor of receiving God's written word. The entire Old Testament is a record of God revealing himself through prophets who proclaimed God's name and God's word.

These prophets of God were very serious about scripture. They did not just hear God's word but they also put it into practice in their daily lives.

Scripture was recorded in books, memorized, studied, and meditated upon. There are many promises of God's blessing upon those who read, study, memorize, and meditate on scripture. (**Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 119:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17**)

God's word was recorded by different people but the recording of scripture was always by the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit inspired the men who wrote down the scriptures.

The fundamental purpose of scripture is to reveal who God is. Scripture points us to the Lord Jesus who gives us eternal life. John 5:39-40, "**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**"

God's prophets spoke at different times in the history of Israel. Many of God's prophets were concentrated during the time period when Israel and Judah were in spiritual decline. This was during the time leading up to the destruction of the nation at the hand of the Assyrians and Babylonians. This was also during the time of the restoration of a remnant to Jerusalem.

With each of God's prophets there was a consistent message of God's hatred of sin, idolatry, and backsliding. The prophets of God warned of God's judgment against sin. Jeremiah stated that a true man of God would stand in God's counsel and turn people away from their sins. (Jeremiah 23:22)

Another aspect of God's message to his people is love and restoration. In all the scriptures there is a message of God's desire to forgive, heal, and restore.

Beside the men who had books named after them there were also prophets who did not write books but whose words were recorded and even their personal ministries were recorded. Good examples include Elijah, Elisha, Nathan, Gad, and also John the Baptist.

I include John the Baptist with the Old Testament prophets because Jesus placed John in that category. Matthew 11:13, "**For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.**"

Moses once commented he wished all of God's people were prophets. Numbers 11:29, "**And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!**"

I believe this an exhortation to the church today. I believe God wants his people to be prophets and priests today in the context of the New Testament. We are to preach God's word and intercede on behalf of other people.

This is the ideal within the New Testament church in 1 Corinthians 14. Paul urged Christians to seek the spiritual gift of prophecy which is designed for the building, encouragement, and comfort of the church.

Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 lists these prophets as gifts to the church. There are pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets, and apostles. It is unlikely we would know the names of modern day apostles or prophets because this work requires humility and denying one's self and name. The prophet washes the feet of the saints. He does not proclaim his own name. 2 Corinthians 4:5, "**For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.**" John the Baptist said, "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**" (John 3:30).

4. The Prophet's Purpose

The purpose of God's prophet is to proclaim God's name, to preach God's word in order to turn people away from sin and to faith in Jesus, and to remind people to listen and obey God's voice. They also point out false gospels and false teachers. They lead by example through trials and in prayer, and demonstrate that God provides.

Before Moses put pen to paper to record the scriptures he received God's name. When Moses met God at the burning bush God told Moses his name.

Exodus 3:14, "And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

Moses heard God's name. He knew the God who spoke to him and called him by his name. When God appeared to him he said, "*Moses, Moses*". He said to a young boy, "*Samuel, Samuel*". God knows a man's name and everything about him.

Exodus 3:4, "And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I."

Moses heard God's voice and received God's name. In a similar way, we need to hear God call our name and we need to know his name.

While correcting God's people God's prophets said the people did not obey the voice of the Lord their God. This shows us we should hear God's voice. God expects his people to hear his voice and hear him call their name. This is a normal way for a Christian to live in a close relationship with the heavenly Father. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. **(John 10:27)**

God's prophet admonishes us of this truth: God speaks! God has a voice. **He speaks!** He can be heard.

People may fear the voice of God. Do they fear God's voice because they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil? **(John 3:19)** Are they seeking their own interests? **(Philippians 2:21)**

God is rich in mercy, however, **(Ephesians 2:4)** and speaks to his prophets and sends them with his name and his word. He sends his prophets to turn people from evil and remind them of who God is, and to proclaim the name of the Lord. **(Exodus 34:5)**

Colossians 1:28, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"

In John chapter 17 Jesus mentions his Father's name. Jesus said he spoke his Father's name to his disciples. **(John 17:6,11,12)**

A man with a perfect heart toward God confesses, but a confession in itself does not ensure God hears prayer. What is in the heart? Is there idolatry? Is there covetousness? Is there a rebellious attitude toward suffering? Let's examine our heart before the Lord and make sure our life lines up when we pray.

Let us be humble before the Lord and ask him to search us for errors, misunderstandings, worldly philosophies or man-made religious beliefs. (**Psalm 139:23**) Even sincere Christians can be temporarily deceived by false gospels which promote idolatry and covetousness in the house of faith.

Is there a falling away in today's church which was prophesied in scriptures? (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**)

Let us guard our heart against deception and protect the deposit of God's Spirit in us. (**Proverbs 4:23**)

Another purpose of God's prophets is to lead God's people by example. They do not exercise worldly authority. They do not lord it over God's people but are instead called to lead God's people by example. They feed the flock of God. God's prophets are gifts from the Lord to the church in order to build, encourage, and comfort the church. (**1 Corinthians 14:3**)

1 Peter 5:2-4, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

5. The Prophet's Provision

The Lord provides.

When Adam and Eve sinned God provided animal skins for a covering. (**Genesis 3:21**) The Lord watches over those who call on his name and who fear him.

Obviously the Lord also provides for wicked people as well, and gives to everyone what they need to live.

However, the Lord makes special promises to believers. The Lord makes a distinction between the way unbelievers have their needs met and the way a believer has his needs met.

Matthew 6:31-33, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." An unbeliever thinks about their needs and desires constantly.

For the believer it is essential he trust in the Lord for provision and not allow himself to become consumed with anxiety over needs or desires. The cares of life can choke the word of God planted in us. (**Luke 8:14; Luke 21:34**)

God's prophets do not make agreements with the attitude or evil spirit behind the world system of government, business, or society. The obvious reason for this is that their message flies in the face of the evil spirit behind the world system.

The Lord sends his prophets to plead with people to turn them from this evil spirit which energizes the world system. He sends his prophets to turn people from Satan and to God. (**Acts 26:18**) A prophet of God speaks God's word and it is a consuming fire and a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. (**Jeremiah 23:29**)

As a result, God's prophet who are faithful to their calling will often not be successful at attaining position or prestige if they work for government, business, or society. The exception to this might be someone like the man of God Daniel who was a prisoner and captive in the government of Babylon. However, even then, we know Daniel did not make agreements or compromise but was often in trouble along with his three friends.

How are God's prophets supposed to live? This is a good question. Remember that a prophet works for God first of all. He does not labor for himself. He is not working only to earn a paycheck.

How does a man know he is a prophet of God? Numbers 12:6, "**And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.**"

No one should presume to be God's prophet or take upon themselves this work. A prophet's lifestyle is strenuous and peculiar in order to maintain the calling. It is not easy. The calling makes it necessary for a man to live a lifestyle others are not equipped for. (**Jeremiah 26:20-23**)

I'm not saying God's prophets are better men or more spiritual men than other brethren in the church. He is only what God's grace makes him. (**1 Corinthians 15:10**) The gift is not by works. It is a gift like salvation is a gift from God. The lifestyle is different and it is a difficult way to live if a man is not equipped for it. When God chooses a prophet he equips him and sustains him. (**Jeremiah 1:4-10**)

The gift does not depend on man (**Romans 11:29**) but a man of God who is of any use will be an overcomer. He does not live carelessly but strives for holiness by standing in the finished work of Christ.

One spiritual gift is the ability to believe God for supernatural provision, which may come outside of the ordinary method of the world system. An example of this in action is Elijah. We read the personal history of Elijah and how God provided for him in **1 Kings 17**. God provided for Elijah through birds bringing him bread and meat. The Lord had a poor woman, who never ran out of oil and flour, providing for herself and Elijah during a season of famine.

Learn the lesson of trusting God for daily bread. Jesus taught us to pray, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" (**Matthew 6:11**). Jesus taught his disciples to live simple lives depending on God's daily provision. This is the lesson taught to Israel in the wilderness when he daily sent them bread from heaven.

It is the lesson that "**man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.**" (**Deuteronomy 8:3**)

This is the lesson we need to learn. It is impossible to be God's prophet without learning the lesson of God's provision.

God's prophets do not agree with the attitude and spirit of the world system. They are an object lesson for the church. Their lives point toward a spiritual walk of faith God desires his children to live in. We walk by faith, and not by sight. We learn to depend on God and be content with what he provides for us. (**Philippians 4:10-13; John 6:27**)

1 Timothy 6:6-8, "**But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.**"

6. The Prophet's Protection

When the Lord calls someone to serve him the Lord himself becomes provision, protection, and inheritance. This is a pattern seen in the Bible. When God spoke to Abram he promised to be his protection and his inheritance.

Genesis 15:1, "**After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.**"

Here are two parts of the threefold promise to God's prophets. God revealed to Abram the Lord was his protection and also the Lord was his reward. God three in one is provision, protection, and prize. Not everyone knows or believes this, but an overcomer knows the Lord is his home: God is provision, protection, and prize.

God's prophets may find themselves in danger through unbelief, or sometimes because of obedience to God who tells them to confront people.

Abraham got in trouble because he allowed fear to control his decisions. Even in those situations, however, the Lord intervened for Abraham and delivered him and Sarah from Gentile kings. (**Genesis 20**). Psalm 105:14-15, "**He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.**"

At other times God led his prophet to elude trouble through supernatural means as when Elijah outfoxed Ahab and Jezebel by laying low at the brook Cherith, and later by moving to Zarephath. (**1 Kings 17**)

When the Lord called Jeremiah he said unto him, "**Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.**" (**Jeremiah 1:8, 19**)

The Lord encourages his prophet not to fear. Why is so much encouragement needed so the man of God won't be afraid? Because people hate him when he proclaims God's word. People hate him and persecute him. The Lord delivers and protects his prophet, and sends people to help him.

When the Lord sent Ezekiel he exhorted him in **Ezekiel 2:6**, "**And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.**"

At times the Lord gives warning about potential danger from an enemy. (**2 Kings 6:32**) The Lord speaks to his prophet to warn him about dangerous or murderous people and their intentions.

An example of God's deliverance is seen in the life of David. After Samuel anointed David (**1 Samuel 16:13**) the Holy Spirit came upon him from that time on. It was not long afterward David entered a long season of persecution from King Saul. David fled from Saul for years. The Lord constantly protected David and delivered him from Saul. Many Psalms were inspired during these trials in David's life. One thing David learned and knew: the Lord was his protection.

Psalm 18:1-3, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

The Lord protects us. He delivers and rescues us. The Lord sends angels to watch over us. **Psalm 91:11-12, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."**

The Lord uses many means which are at his disposal to protect his prophets. At times this means supernatural deliverance as with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace or with Daniel in the lion's den. The Lord is able to protect the overcomer.

Not only does God use supernatural means but also he uses simple, plain folks to lend a hand. In Jeremiah chapter 38 he was thrown into a dungeon where he sank down in the mud. The Lord sent Ebed Melech the Ethiopian to intercede with the king and rescued Jeremiah from the dungeon.

We see from these examples the Lord is our protector and our deliverer.

What does it mean when a prophet of the Lord is not rescued from prison and when he is not rescued from death? An example is John the Baptist. Jesus himself said there was never a greater man of God than John, and yet John ended life a martyr.

How did God protect John the Baptist?

There are times in God's wisdom and prudence he allows the enemy to persecute and kill his prophets. Jesus himself made mention of this.

Matthew 5:10-12, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Luke 12:4, "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."

Not everyone who is a Christian lives a life free of pain and suffering. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**" (2 Timothy 3:12)

When men of God suffer: what does this mean? Does it mean they had less faith or did not have a certain quality or quantity of faith to pray through for deliverance and rescue? No!

Hebrews 11:35-40, "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

God is our protector. He does protect us and keep us. However, sometimes the prize and the inheritance outweigh temporary safety. What God has laid up in heaven overrides temporary deliverance on earth.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

1 Peter 1:4, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"

7. The Prophet's Portion

The prophet works for the Lord and the Lord promises he rewards the prophet with an inheritance. The Lord himself is the prophet's portion.

Jesus makes mention of reward in **Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."**

What kind of reward is this we have in heaven? I think we can glimpse part of this reward in the apostle Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians. **"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)**

It is the reward of the prophet that his words turn people to God. His goal is for people to turn to God in repentance and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's constant desire was every man he reached be made whole and complete in their knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the honor of prophets to preach God's word and lead many people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Daniel 12:3, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

One aspect of the reward prophets receive is to see all their labors and sacrifices were not in vain. They will see the fruit of their labors in the many lives brought into God's Kingdom.

The Lord Himself is the reward of the prophet. God said to Abram, **"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1)**

The work of the prophet is with a Kingdom still yet in our future. We can see this Kingdom with spiritual eyes, like Abraham who lived in this world as a stranger and pilgrim. **Hebrews 11:10, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."**

We may have to suffer and go without on this earth but a day is coming when all sickness, sorrow, death, and tears will be put away. We look forward to the great day of God when the Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. Amen! **(2 Peter 3:13)**

The next step towards this is the third day in God's plan. We know day one of God's plan is Israel. Day two we currently live in which is the day of the Christian church. Day three is the day of God's Kingdom and the Lord Jesus will sit upon the throne in Jerusalem and reign as

King over all the nations of the earth. The third day lasts one thousand years, a millennium, and then the universe as we know it is complete. (**Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8; Revelation 20:2-7**)

From the perspective of men there is one week in time. We now live at the end of the sixth day, and the seventh day is ready to dawn, the day of the Lord, the Kingdom Age prophesied throughout the Old and New Testament.

In the day of Israel there were prophets, priests, and kings. During the age of the Church we are prophets and priests. In the day of the Kingdom there is a King, and the overcomer in Christ will reign and rule with him. Hallelujah, for the Lord God Almighty reigns! Amen.
(Revelation 2:26-29; Revelation 3:21; Revelation 19:6)

Theologians in the past produced systematic theologies to explain, categorize, and describe God's dealings with mankind throughout history. Men divided and subdivided the history of Israel and the church.

I am suggesting a simple way of understanding the Bible, theology, Israel, the Church, and God's plan for the ages. Remember this is only a canvas spread out to structure truth so we can grasp it.

From the viewpoint of man we live in time and space represented in a seven day week. Man is given six days, and the seventh day belongs to the Lord. The seventh day is the Kingdom Age, and the millennial reign of Christ on this earth.

The six days are divided between Israel and the Church. Israel had four days and the Church had two days. These two time periods, or elements of time, comprise the six days of man. I'm describing a structure or system from the point of view of man within time and space.

From God's point of view there are three days. The first day is Israel, the second day is the Church, and the third day is the kingdom. All three are one. The Church does not replace Israel. True Israel is the church. And the church exists in Israel as a true, believing remnant, those who are of the faith of Abraham and the promise. Within the church there is a remnant which is the true spiritual bride of Christ who is the true Israel of God. See how all this is mixed together? Israel, church, and the kingdom are all one. Three in one. This is an expression of who God is.

God is three in one. Israel, church, and the kingdom are three in one. Prophet, Priest, and King. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Israel, Church, and the Kingdom. Hallelujah!

Hosea 6:2, "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

We can verify this through bible study. We need a Strong's Concordance for the King James Bible and search for the phrase "third day".

As Christians we associate "third day" with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the foundation and capstone of God's plan in three days. Why was he raised from the dead on the third day? It points to God's plan for the ages and it points to the nature, character, and essence of God three in one! When we know who God is the Bible becomes plain and straightforward.

It is not a coincidence that when the Lord Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried he rose again on the third day. All these numbers, days, and times are significant in grasping God's revelation of who he is.

God is three in one. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Lord is also Israel, church, and the Kingdom. He is also a prophet, a priest, and a king.

He is also expressed by the three elements in the Ark of the Covenant: Tables of Law, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna. (**Hebrews 9:4**) All of these elements are an expression of who God is. One ark and three elements. Each of these elements parallel with Israel, church, and the kingdom. The law is Israel, Aaron's rod is the church, and the golden pot of manna is the kingdom. (**See also Revelation 2:17**)

Israel is the prophet. I think it is interesting Israel is called "the children of the prophets". **Acts 3:25, "Ye are the children of the prophets"**

Israel is seen as the prophet proclaiming God's word. It was Moses God used to communicate God's Law, it was David who brought us the Psalms, and it was a multitude of other prophets who filled the rest of the Old Testament scripture. There is no doubt in my mind Israel is the prophet, and Israel is day one in God's three days.

Day one concluded when the Lord Jesus was rejected by the Jewish religious leaders of his day and crucified.

At that point, when the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom Israel was suspended temporarily from being God's primary expression of who he is. We will see a revived Israel during the kingdom as well which has put her faith in Messiah Jesus. Let me add, I believe the unbelieving nation of Israel we see today is a part of God's plan. In every one of God's days all three elements of Israel, church, and the kingdom exist. Paul mentioned in passing "*the church, the Gentiles, and the Jews*". We always have all three elements present in each of the three days, but in each day one element is front and center.

Some believe the church replaced Israel. I do not agree. As I have said already all three are one. God expresses himself mainly through one of Israel, church, or the kingdom depending on where we are in time and space. However, all three are one and the same.

The Lord himself is the prize of his prophet and he needs nothing else. He is happy because the Lord is good and that is good enough. Amen.

8. Prophets Agree With God

God's prophets resist the spirit behind the world system. They do not agree with the goal and purpose of the world system which is self worship. The outward machinery of the world system consists of government, business, and society. The prophet is working directly for the Lord and the Lord is his provider, protection, and prize.

The world is defined spiritually by the apostle John in **1 John 2:15-17**, "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**"

The three distinct spiritual parts of the world system are: **(1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life.**

It is very important for the overcoming Christian to memorize this and ask the Lord for discernment.

The machinery, or external body of the world system, is: **(1) Government, (2) Business, and (3) Society.**

Each part of the world system is a distortion of the glory of God, and the expression of who God is. The Christian cannot escape this outward machinery of the world system.

Jesus prayed in **John 17:15**, "**I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.**" Here we see Jesus makes a distinction between the outward machinery of the world system and the spiritual evil nature of the world system.

Christians are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We should bring the Kingdom of God with us into all of these areas.

It is easy for a Christian to become enamored, distracted, sidetracked, and absorbed into this world system. For many, it may be the love of money which gets them. For others it may be immorality or the desire for prestige.

I will outline each part of the system, its parts, and how Christians are primarily tempted in each part.

Christians are tempted in all three areas of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. However, depending upon where they work in the world system they become more vulnerable to certain aspects of the world system and evil spirit.

Before getting into each part let me restate God's prophets do not make agreements with the world system. They do not strike hands in agreement with the attitude and spirit behind government, business, or with society.

The reason for this no agreement policy is because it is necessary to maintain separation from the spirit of the world completely. This separation is a humiliation for the prophet of God, and the humiliation keeps the prophet consecrated. The consecration preserves the calling and the anointing. Also, this attitude of separation and resistance should remind others in the church that they do not belong to the world system. We need to be careful not to become entangled with it.

The Christian who works in the realm of government is tempted by man's strength and carnal power. This is the lust of the flesh. This is also why the government makes war. (**James 4:1**) Government is usually lying when they tell their citizens they go to war to protect their country. This is not the case always, but almost always governments make war because of the lust for strength and power. Domination and subjecting people is the heart and soul of government.

The Christian in the realm of business (especially leaders, owners or executives) are tempted by money. This is idolatry and covetousness. Idolatry and covetousness go hand in hand with sexual immorality as well as promiscuous behavior. This is also the lust of the eyes. We covet what we see with our eyes. We worship what we covet. This is directly tied to the business world, money, idolatry, covetousness, and sexual immorality. These are the areas a Christian business executive suffers temptation the most.

For the unbeliever, a business executive is dominated by these attributes and it runs their lives. It is almost a cliche among unbelievers that a business executive will have an affair with his or her assistant. They are obsessed with money, their idol, and the physical manifestation of this lust is sexual immorality.

This is a difficult place for a Christian to maintain a consistent walk of victory in the Lord Jesus but it can be done. Nothing is impossible with God. Jesus said it is as difficult as a camel threading the eye of a needle but nothing is impossible with God.

The Christian who works for society is tempted by a desire for prestige, position, and power through reputation. Society includes civic leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, and citizens. Jobs in this area include pastors, priests, lawyers, doctors, nurses, police, firemen - any person who serves the community. These people are enticed by the desire for promotion, position, and prestige. Unfortunately Christian business leaders who desire religious leadership positions fall underneath this category as well and so face double temptation.

People working in non-profit organizations aggressively seek out prestige in their community because they falsely think this is where their help and strength come from. This is the pride of life.

The prophet, at one time or another, may be led by God to rebuke and correct people in all of these areas. This is another reason why it is impossible for the prophet to agree with the spirit behind the world system. He cannot make agreements with the idolatry of the world system. He is outside the world system and stands against it. This is also why prophets of God are usually martyred and suffer tremendously in their lives for their testimony.

9. The Prophet Is Tested

There is a danger the Lord's prophet will develop spiritual pride and think he is better than others. The consecration of making no agreement with the worldly spirit is a humiliation which helps keep this problem to a minimum. Spiritual pride, however, is a real danger.

Delusions of grandeur can sometimes fill the mind of the Lord's prophet so the Lord inflicts humiliation for those serving in the church. It's not always the prophet's fault, either. Sometimes it is because people are superstitious and put God's prophets in a special category.

It seems apostles are singled out for special suffering. **1 Corinthians 4:9-13** reveals how apostles are treated by the world and church. **1 Corinthians 4:9**, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." These are not words of someone enjoying a prestigious title of apostle.

The Lord allows this opposition to help his prophet remain humble. Paul relates in **2 Corinthians 12:7**, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Pride is a struggle in the ministry.

The next test is provision. God's prophets operate contrary to the world system. In this regard he faces tests of service and life. These are not tests of passing or failure only but are also tests of life and death.

1 Kings 13 provides the history of a prophet and also another prophet. On the surface this account appears bizarre and hard to comprehend. It is only when this account is viewed as a test in regard to provision does it make sense.

To get a clear picture I need to take a step back and recount the life of another prophet whose name was Balaam. Balaam's history recounts how God used a donkey to rebuke the prophet. The donkey reproved the madness of the prophet Balaam. (**2 Peter 2:16**). What was this madness? Balaam was a prophet who prostituted his gift for money. The Bible says he loved the wages of unrighteousness. (**2 Peter 2:15**). He was in the ministry for money.

We see the attitude of Peter and of the Lord towards mixing money and ministry in **Acts 8:20**, "**But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.**"

Jude 11, "**Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.**"

2 Peter 2:15-16, "**Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.**"

Revelation 2:14, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

This mad prophet prostitutes his ministry for money. It is clear Balaam was only interested in money. Also, keep in mind how prominent the donkey is portrayed in the history of the mad prophet.

Now we can return to the prophets in **1 Kings 13**. This account starts out really well for the man of God from Judah. He is obedient to God and delivers God's message. When King Jeroboam rises up in anger against him God strikes the king by freezing his hand. This is evidence the Lord protected this prophet from any retaliation from the king. King Jeroboam recognized this man of God from Judah was under God's protection. He pleaded with the prophet to intercede for him and was healed.

What is the result of this confrontation? King Jeroboam offers provision and a reward to the prophet. The prophet walked in his anointing and rejected the king's provision. (This reminds me of the story of the prophet Daniel, as well). At this point the prophet from Judah was obeying God.

In verse 9 the prophet received a word from God about provision and he was not allowed to retrace his steps. The implication of this is enormous, because this is not only for this prophet but applies in principle to all God's prophets. It is the principle of relying only on Jehovah for provision (**Matthew 6:33**) and also never to retrace our steps (**Luke 9:62**). New wine cannot be poured into old wine skins. (**Matthew 9:17**) We can never go backwards. We have to go forward.

The really important part I want to draw our attention to is the issue with provision. **1 Kings 13:9, "For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest."** The instruction for this prophet related to how he should not receive provision. He had no problem seeing he could not accept the king's bread. This is obviously making an agreement with the government.

Now the account takes a strange twist. An older prophet hears about the man of God from Judah. He has compassion on him and desires to help the man of God from Judah. He invites him home to eat bread. Initially the man of God continues to resist and declines the invitation, restating again he was instructed not to eat bread in that place. The word "bread" is repeated over and over in this account. This is a clue that this is a warning to all the Lord's prophets to beware how they receive bread.

The older prophet, out of compassion, deceived this man of God from Judah, and told him God wanted him to accept bread from the older prophet.

The man of God from Judah believed the lie and disobeyed simple instructions from God. As a result, while they ate, God's word came to the old prophet and he prophesied regarding the

death of the man of God from Judah. The man of God from Judah saddled his donkey, departed, and was killed by a lion.

This story underlines the donkey and lion standing passively beside the corpse of the man of God from Judah as a witness and a testimony. There's no doubt in my mind *the donkey represents Balaam* and the prophet's failure in this test of provision. The ***lion can be no other than Satan himself, the devil.*** ***1 Peter 5:18, "...the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."***

This is how serious the test of provision is for the Lord's prophets. God's prophet cannot make agreement with the spirit of idolatry and witchcraft behind government, business, or society. To do so means losing the anointing and becoming a prey to the enemy. When the prophet of the Lord enters the workforce he does so for the purpose of being salt and light. Jesus said we are salt and light. This is our purpose. Our purpose is to obey God no matter where we are at. This is especially important in the workplace. We must constantly stay on guard and remember that we represent the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere we go.

In the account of the prophets in **1 Kings 13** no names are mentioned. These are anonymous prophets. Another test of a prophet is not making a name for one's self.

In **Revelation 3:12** Jesus makes a promise to overcomers that he will write the name of his God and the name of the city of his God upon the overcomer. He will also write his new name upon the overcomer.

When Jesus was on his way to Calvary he taught his disciples to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. Christians think this means they simply tack on to the end of a prayer "in the name of Jesus". I'm not saying we should not include "in the name of Jesus" with prayer. I do think we should take time to receive an understanding of what this means.

When an ambassador is sent by a country they carry the authority of that nation. An ambassador carries the name of their country as authority. They do not have power in themselves. They do not accomplish anything in their name but do everything in the name of their country.

This is similar to when an ambassador is sent by a king. There is an account of how King David sent ambassadors to the Ammonites (**2 Samuel 10**) to express his condolences for the death of their king. Hanun, the son of the deceased king, received David's ambassadors and treated them shamefully by cutting off their beards and their clothes. When David heard this it was as if Hanun did this to David himself. David was enraged and this led to war between Israel and the Ammonites. The point is this: these messengers carried David's name, and in his name they represented his authority and power.

When we take the name of Christ we receive the authority of King Jesus. However, I think Christians take the name of Jesus in word only but not into the heart. They call themselves Christian but live like the world around them. They make a name for themselves rather than making the name of the Lord great and glorious.

People make a name for themselves. In the account of the tower of Babel in **Genesis 11** we see this desire for making a name for one's self and the self exaltation of making a name. These people wanted to make a name for themselves so they wouldn't be scattered over the world.

Why is this? What's the big deal with everyone going their own way? These people desired prestige, protection, and provision. All of this required numbers of people. The more numbers the more prestige, protection, and provision.

The devils told Jesus their name was Legion for they were many. There is a reason the Lord Jesus exposed the name of these devils. This principle of making a name and numbers is seen at the tower of Babel. Their power is in making a name and multiplying their numbers. This is exactly how the world system operates. This is the foundational principle of every business and corporation.

This is still true today. Men make a name for themselves and multiply their power through numbers of people they bring into submission under their name. One will even receive a number under a government (social security number), or a number when you work for a corporation (employee number). Men practice these methods of control for prestige, provision, and protection. I doubt the people who put these principles into motion realize what they are doing. They are controlled by the evil spirit who works in all unbelievers. (**Ephesians 2:2**)

Overcomers have an intuition they should deny themselves, deny their own name, and take the name of Jesus. We gather together with Jesus. We do not scatter, we gather in his name. Our authority is in him, not in ourselves, not in our numbers.

"It is finished", Jesus said. (**John 19:30**) The Lord Jesus completed the work of redemption and we believe and rest in the finished work of Christ. We are one with him.

Becoming one with Christ is taking his name and denying our name. Jesus said unless you deny yourself and take up your cross you cannot be his disciple.

Those in Christ have his name written on them. Only those with the name of Christ on them can truly pray "in Jesus' name". You must be in Christ to pray in Christ's name. If you are not living in Christ merely saying "in Jesus' name" does not accomplish anything.

The tests of the prophet I have outlined are humility, provision, and denying one's own name.

10. The Prophet's Authority

As the prophet of the Lord is tested in humility, provision, and denying his name he grows in spiritual authority.

This spiritual authority is described as hidden manna in **Revelation 2:17**, "**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I**

give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Remember the ark of the covenant again. The elements within the ark were the law, Aaron's rod, and the golden pot of manna.

This manna was hidden manna because it was put away whereas the manna the people ate was public manna. The manna the people ate which tasted of oil and honey was the public manna available to everyone.

The law parallels Israel and Aaron's rod parallels the church. This is day one and day two of God's three days.

The third day is the kingdom represented by the hidden manna. *To eat of the hidden manna is to receive kingdom authority, and with it the power to act in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*

This is revealed to God's people by revelation from God three in one. This is given to those the Lord chooses. (**John 15:16**) We hear God's voice, because the sheep hear the shepherd's voice.

As the prophet abides in the name of the Lord he moves into a new dwelling place. This is a home where he and the Lord live together. (**Revelation 21:3**) In this place there is provision, protection, and the Lord is the prize.

In scripture we see God's prophets speak in the name of the Lord. They spoke the word of blessing and cursing and words of life and death. In the New Testament we still are concerned with life and death. The wages of sin is death. The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus. (**Romans 6:23**)

In the world system government is the distortion of the prophet. The business realm is the distortion of the priest. Society is the distortion of the king.

As Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36) the prophet is not of this world. We are given authority now which will be fully expressed on day three of the kingdom age.

What is this authority? It is authority to proclaim the forgiveness of sins (**Matthew 9:6**). It is authority to lay hands on the sick and heal them (**Mark 16:18**). It is authority to cast out devils (**Matthew 12:28**) and destroy the works of the devil (**1 John 3:8**).

This authority is given to God's prophets and is not only for apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. This authority is given to every Christian who takes Christ's name and denies their own life and name. Any Christian who completely submits themselves to the Lord Jesus can walk in the authority the Lord gives in his name. We are ambassadors for Christ.

God's prophets in Israel's history had authority to anoint kings for Israel. Samuel anointed Saul and David as king. Other prophets were involved in anointing kings in Israel as well.

The job was not done with anointing kings. They also were watchmen of the king, and if the king stepped out of line they reproved him.

Most of us are not persevering in this responsibility of reproofing government, business, and society. The message from Christian leaders is self-help. It is about living a good life. As a result, gangrene spreads through government, business, and society. Christians should be salt and light to act as a preservative against decay.

11. The Prophet Keeps A Low Profile

Why is it important to deny one's name and keep a low profile? There are two reasons which I cover here: (1) provision, (2) pride.

Pride is the enemy of God's anointing. A man infected with pride cannot abide in the Lord. The Lord hates pride and opposes any man who walks in pride. God opposes the proud.

James 4:6, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

1 Peter 5:5, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

When the Bible repeats a message in the Old and the New Testament I pay attention. There is an important message God is communicating to us.

God's prophets are in danger of falling into the delusion of esteeming oneself higher than he ought to. (**Romans 12:3**) This is a dangerous problem. This is why prophets are to strive to be humble in all situations in life. Humility is the consecration, and the consecration is humility. God's prophets resist the world system. The anointing rests on the man of humility. A man who is humble cannot fit in with the spirit of the world in any shape, form, or fashion. The world system demands a person have pride and ambition in order to fit.

This brings me to provision. For a prophet, Jehovah is our provision. Jesus is the bread of life. Jesus is provision for the prophet. It is tempting to look to other people for provision or to make agreements with people for provision.

Making agreements with people on the basis of provision causes the prophet to lose his anointing. Remember the purpose of God's prophet is to be salt and light.

God's "gift and calling is without repentance" (**Romans 11:29**), but the influence of the prophet fades when he compromises.

Why? A prophet works directly for God and not man. He can never have the attitude that he is working for men for the purpose of provision. He may get a paycheck but that is not his end goal when he engages the world system. His end goal is to be an ambassador of Christ Jesus.

Does this mean the prophet can never receive financial returns for his work?

Of course the Christian can receive a return for his work. However, we must always be on the alert that provision is not our end goal or what controls our life. If we do allow money to be the goal of our life then we become idolaters. This will bring us into bondage.

The Christian knows provision comes from the Lord.

The Lord provides even in supernatural ways many times. The examples I'm thinking of are Elisha. He was given an apartment by the Shunamite woman in **2 Kings 4:8-10**. Also, Elijah and the widow at Zarephath is another example in **1 Kings 17:8-10**. These situations did not bring the prophet of the Lord into bondage to the world system.

Provision comes from God because the prophet works for God. **1 Corinthians 9:14, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."**

The majority of Christians work in the world system as salt and light. However, there are God's prophets who are gifts to the church and part of being a gift to the church is a different lifestyle and testimony. There are people the Lord sets aside to serve him in the church in a vocational capacity.

Deliverance from self is necessary for the Christian. Deliverance from self is accomplished in the same way as forgiveness of sins. It is by faith in the finished work of Christ.

The "self" life must be put down. Jesus said his disciples deny themselves and take up their cross. To understand taking up the cross is fundamental. It means to see by revelation I am crucified with Christ. When Christ was crucified, I was crucified with him. I am made one with Christ, even as Christ is one with the Father. Read **John chapter 17** to see what I am describing. I am one with Christ, even as Christ is one with the Father. I am one with Christ. My oneness with Christ in crucifixion deals the death blow to "self" life.

Other words for "self" in the Bible are old man, flesh, or carnal man. All of this returns to humility and not making a name for one's self. To make a name for one's self is the same as denying the name of Christ. Only when I deny my own name, which is myself, can I truly take on Christ's name and be a Christian. Truly a Christian is one with Christ. This oneness cannot be made with the person who seeks his own life or seeks to build or make his own name. He who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for Christ will find it.

The reason people want to make a name for their own self goes back to provision. The purpose for pride and asserting one's own self is so a person can obtain money and power. It goes back to provision. Jesus said this is the attitude of the world. But for the Christian we seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness and these other things are added unto us.

Matthew 6:31-34, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

For the Christian working in the world system of government, business, or society there is only one goal and it is not to make money. The only goal for a Christian in the workforce is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Jesus promised he will take care of our needs. Our purpose in working is to be a witness for the Lord Jesus where he places us. If this is our goal we will overcome temptations which come with working in the world system. If our heart is right, we overcome any situation God puts us in. **Colossians 3:23, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."**

Christians keep a low profile. Christians are not here to make a name for themselves but to exalt the Lord Jesus in every capacity we can.

Now we begin to see how it is important to be low profile. We must decrease, and he must increase. (**John 3:30**)

12. The Prophet Prays

Ezekiel 22:30, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

God is obligated by his justice to execute judgment. When people sin it affects creation and has an impact on the land. The entire creation groans because of our fall into sin and it eagerly awaits God's restoration. (**Romans 8:22**)

God looks for men who intercede in prayer to hold back the downward spiraling effects of sin. Men of prayer intercede with God and allow God to use them to hold back sin, and so also God's inevitable judgment upon sin.

Abraham knew this principle when he intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord revealed to Abraham his judgment was imminent upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

Amos 3:7, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

This is for several purposes. One purpose is for the prophet to warn people and turn them away from their sins. Another reason is because God desires men to be intercessors.

Because of what Jesus accomplished in his finished, completed work we can approach the throne of God with confidence to pray and intercede. It is the Lord's will to give us grace and mercy in our time of need. We need to pray and ask for it not only for ourselves but also for our families, our coworkers, our community, and for our nation.

1 Timothy 2:1-4, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

We also pray and ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers and workers into the harvest field to seek and to save those who are lost. (**Luke 10:2**)

Remember, also, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. (**Psalm 122:6**)

When Abraham prayed it was according to the principle that God would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. We should remember this when considering events in the last days.

The Lord does not destroy the righteous with the wicked. The Lord has always removed or hid the righteous when his wrath was poured out on any people.

1 Thessalonians 5:9, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"

Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah on this principle. Where did he get this idea? He got it from the Lord, because Abraham was God's prophet.

God's prophets are not just spokesmen but they are prayer intercessors.

This is pointed out in **James 5:17, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."**

In the last days God's wrath will not be designed for discipline or correction, it will be designed as punishment upon the wicked who will not repent (Revelation 9:21). This is outlined graphically in the book of Revelation.

When Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah no doubt he was thinking of his nephew Lot and his family. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.

The Lord heard Abraham and rescued Lot out of those doomed cities.

2 Peter 2:7-9, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to

deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished".

The prophet Daniel was an intercessor. He prayed three times a day, and when he understood from the prophecies of Jeremiah a remnant would return to Jerusalem after 70 years he earnestly prayed for his people. Daniel's prayer is recorded in Daniel chapter 9, and is one of the most powerful prayers in the Old Testament. We should read Daniel chapter 9 and pray for the church.

Let us pray the Lord will have mercy on us and cause people to humble themselves, repent, and receive a fear of God in their lives. Daniel definitely had a deep and reverential fear of God. This is how he addresses the Lord: "**O Lord, the great and dreadful God..." (Daniel 9:4)**

One quality we sorely lack in the church is a deep and reverential fear of God. We need God's fear in our hearts. God's fear will cause us to pray and to intercede with real sincerity and with genuine earnestness.

When we think of prayer we usually are thinking in terms of asking God to bless us and also to bless our friends.

However, in scripture we see another kind of prayer modern Christians who have never experienced persecution would think a foreign concept in prayer. These are prayers God would send judgment upon the wicked. These prayers do not originate with man who loves self but come from the heart of God. These prayers are a reflection of God's hatred and anger towards sin and towards men who will not repent of their sins.

We see David, a man after God's own heart, praying judgment upon God's enemies in the book of Psalms.

Another prophet we see praying for God's judgment was the weeping prophet Jeremiah.

When people hear God's word preached they know the gospel and know God is real but instead of repentance they harden their heart against God.

Proverbs 29:1, "He, that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Only the Lord knows when he is finished with someone. It is not like God draws a line in the sand and says if we cross this line he refuses to love us anymore.

However, people become hardened in their sin and become incapable of believing God's word any more. They develop a reprobate mind. These people despise God's grace and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. They can no longer be brought to feel conviction for sin, righteousness, or judgment. In these cases, God's Spirit prays through the prophet and reveals what will happen to these wicked people.

Psalm 7:11, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

We see prophets of God proclaim God's word and intercede for God's people and their enemies.

There are also examples of when they prayed for themselves in repentance towards God.

David is a good example of prayers of repentance. Psalm 51 records his prayer of repentance in regard to Bathsheba and also Uriah. I repeat the words of this psalm when I fail God and seek God's mercy and forgiveness in prayer.

Psalm 51:10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

David understood he could not fix his heart. He was broken by sin. He knew only the Lord could give him a new heart. It is the Lord who makes us alive. It is the Lord who gives us the ability to recognize our heart is not right and there is something wrong with us. David prayed and asked the Lord for a clean heart and a right spirit. No matter how hard men try to cleanse their conscience with worldly psychology, philosophy, and man-made religious systems only the Lord can give a clean heart and a right spirit. This is a gift from God.

David is concerned for keeping God's presence and God's Spirit. A man of God sees and recognizes that without God's presence and God's Holy Spirit he is nothing. He can do nothing.

Zechariah 4:6, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

In John 15:5 Jesus says, "**I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**"

Moses, speaking to God, said he would not go up unless God's presence went with him. **(Exodus 33:14-16)**

A man of God values God's Spirit and God's presence above all things. He fears doing anything which would grieve the Holy Spirit or cause God's presence to withdraw from him. Unlike Eli, who didn't seem concerned about Samuel's prophecy regarding the departure of God's glory, a true prophet of the Lord is terrified God's Spirit or presence would leave him. He realizes without God he is a dead man. Without the Lord's anointing, he is prey unto the enemy.

A man of God is willing to suffer anything, sacrifice anything, if only he can walk in God's presence and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

This walking in the Lord's presence is the same thing Paul wrote about when he said he wanted to know Christ. He counted everything as dung compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

Being in the Lord's presence is to know him, to experience him, and to be filled with his Holy Spirit.

Philippians 3:7-8, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

The heart of a prayer of repentance is to be restored to the presence of the Lord. Sin separates us from God.

Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

A man of God knows sin separates him from God and will live a life as clean as possible to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit, and if he does sin he is quick to renounce the sin, repent, and confess to the Lord. (**1 John 1:9**)

Another one of David's frequent prayers was for God's deliverance. In **Psalm 18:2** David declares the Lord is his deliverer.

There are many prayers of David in the Psalms for God's deliverance. David was hunted down by King Saul and constantly needed the Lord's help in delivering him from the hand of his enemy.

Paul also mentions deliverance in **2 Corinthians 1:9-10, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."**

Paul says God did deliver, he is delivering, and he will yet deliver us. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He will never leave us or forsake us. If the Lord has delivered me in the past I can encourage myself by remembering what the Lord did for me. I don't want to be like Israel in the wilderness and forget what God did for me. (**Psalm 78:11; Psalm 106:13; Psalm 106:21**)

There is a real enemy out there. We pray we may be delivered from this enemy.

Jesus gave us an example of praying for deliverance. **Matthew 6:13, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."**

We are warned about this enemy throughout the New Testament. There is an accuser of the brethren (**Revelation 12:10**).

James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Jesus told his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane to watch and pray. This spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. He told them to pray they would not fall into temptation. (**Matthew 26:41**)

Peter learned how this enemy sifts a man as wheat. He wrote in 1 Peter 5:8-9, "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.**"

We need to pray for deliverance from evil and temptation. Not only do some never pray for deliverance but they run headlong into temptation and into evil. How can a Christian think he will remain pure while constantly putting vile things in front of his eyes?

We listen to emptiness, we look at emptiness, and wonder why we walk around feeling so empty and dry spiritually. Christians run headlong into the arms of the enemy. It is as if we are completely asleep!

I'll never forget a dream I had once from the Lord. This was when I was a new Christian, and I still did not understand my gift from the Lord. I thought all Christians experienced this stuff.

In the dream I stood in the countryside. It was a countryside of green grass and no trees. Just wide open rolling green grasslands.

Beside me was a long line of people standing in single file formation. Somewhere in the far distance I heard the sound of a wet "thud", "thud", "thud".

I was struck with a feeling of terror and I did not know why. As my fear mounted I screamed at the people standing in the line. They would not even turn in my direction or pay any attention to me. It was like no one could hear me. I tried pulling on their shirt sleeves to force them to get out of line, but they slipped out of my fingers. It was like I could not touch them.

I ran toward the beginning of the line. The closer I got the more I saw a rectangular box shape in the distance, like a box turned on its side. I saw the box glimmer or glint with light each time there was a wet "thud" sound.

In a few moments my running speed accelerated to that of a racing horse or a car. I realized with horror the box object was a guillotine. The people in line were voluntarily putting their heads into the mechanism for the executioner.

I saw some people I knew at that time in my life putting their heads down into the mechanism and their heads rolled to my feet. Their eyes looked at me in shock and amazement. I awoke from this dream crying, shaking, terrified!

I don't know if anyone will be able to understand the importance that we should pray for deliverance.

Luke 21:35-36, "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

13. The Prophet Like Moses

Deuteronomy 18:15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"

Acts 3:22, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

Acts 3:24-25, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Moses saw a day when prophecy of the seed would be fulfilled. Moses said there would arise a brother in Israel who would be a prophet like Moses. Moses commanded them they should listen to the words of this prophet.

We know this prophecy was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus because Peter declares what Moses prophesied was indeed fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. He goes on to say Israel is the children of the prophets.

In what way is Jesus a prophet like unto Moses?

He was like Moses in that he spoke God's word to the people. A good example of this is Matthew chapters 5 through 7 where Jesus preached the law of the kingdom of God.

He is also like Moses in that he is the head of a household. Moses was considered a faithful servant in God's household, and Jesus came as a son over his household. He is now the head over the church. (**Hebrews 3:5-6**). We see a comparison made and yet Jesus is magnified over Moses.

Jesus is also a prophet like Moses because he prophesied of future events.

Jesus taught about the end of the age and gave descriptions of what the world would be like when he returned to be King over all the nations. (**Matthew 24**)

Jesus is a prophet like Moses in the sense he reproved, corrected, and rebuked Israel in the hope of bringing them to repentance and eternal life.

The religious leaders in the day of Jesus were proud of their knowledge of scripture.

John 5:39-40, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Also, in Matthew 23 we can read what the Lord said when he reproved the religious leaders of that day.

Jesus is like Moses in that he lived among us but was separate, holy, and consecrated. It was obvious to others Jesus lived a holy, consecrated life. He even challenged his critics to convict him of sin. (**John 8:46**). They could not do it. Jesus is completely pure and without any sin. (**1 Peter 2:22**)

God uses prophecy throughout scripture to glorify his name and convince people he is God.

Isaiah 46:9-10, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

God knows the end from the beginning. He speaks through his prophets to tell people what will come to pass so they will believe in his name and trust in him.

The purpose of prophecy is to reveal who God is, to warn people, and to cause people to fear the Lord and to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Lord condemns anyone who seeks out fortune tellers and witches. Anyone who seeks to know the future by a fortune teller or familiar spirit comes under God's wrath and judgment.

1 Samuel 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

2 Chronicles 33:6, "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger."

Micah 5:12, "And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers:"

Galatians 5:19-21, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envirings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Revelation 9:20-21, "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

Revelation 21:8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The reason I include so many scriptures on this topic is because witchcraft is popular in our current society. Everywhere we look, especially around Halloween, there are witches with men, women, and children pretending to be witches. This is evil stuff! Don't mess with this or participate in anything which glorifies witchcraft, sorcery, or fortune tellers. This includes the horoscope in the newspaper.

Back to our discussion on a prophet like unto Moses! I believe Father God parallels the role of the prophet in the triune Godhead. The prophet speaks God's word. Jesus is known as the Word of God. In eternity I see the Father as the prophet who speaks the Word, and all of creation comes into existence.

The New Testament only mentions Jesus being like a prophet in fulfillment of what Moses said. But in a sense Jesus is not a prophet like anyone else because he was and he is the very Word of God. Jesus never said anywhere "Thus saith the Lord". He simply opened his mouth (**Matthew 5:2**) and spoke to the people, and with authority because he himself is the prophetic Word spoken by Father God.

Revelation 19:10, "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Here we see a warning to those who carry God's word to others. Do not allow people to ascribe worthiness to you, or seek to elevate you or give you titles. This is the subtlety of the enemy. He seeks to instill pride, arrogance, or put you into a position or give you prestige.

Worship God! Do not be led astray but know who you are. You are a fellow servant and a brother to all those who carry the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

14. The Priest

God is three in one. He is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

These three are also expressed in the three days of Israel, church, and the kingdom.

This also parallels the roles of prophet, priest, and king.

All of this can be seen by examining the contents of the Ark of the Covenant in **Hebrews 9:4** and by a comparison of the different types of manna in **Exodus 16:31, 33 and Numbers 11:7-8**.

I have talked about Israel as the prophet. Israel is the prophet who proclaims God's word. We can see Father God as a prophet who proclaims his word and the universe was created. All of creation reflects the glory of God in this "three in one" principle of life.

The priest represents the people to God.

Jesus is the high priest over his household of priests because he represents us before God and is now interceding for us.

Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

This role of priest is important because man is separated from God as a result of sin.

The Old Testament priest followed instructions from God on how to make reconciliation between the people and God. Old Testament priests received specific instructions on performing their duties. Priests in the New Testament have instructions from the Lord which are specific as well.

Let me make it clear I am not talking about priests in the Catholic church. When I talk about priests in the New Testament I am describing the priesthood of all believers before God. Scripture is clear that every believer has direct access to God through the Lord Jesus. (**1 Timothy 2:5**)

In each one of the three days there are prophets, priests, and kings but the manifestation of each role changes with each day. We can avoid confusion by seeing each role as different and distinct in each of the three days.

15. Abel's Sacrifice

Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh"

Genesis 4:4, "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:"

Hebrews 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Abel was not the first to offer God a sacrifice. His brother Cain gave God an offering made from the fruit of the ground.

After Cain gave an offering then Abel gave a sacrifice to God as well. However, Abel offered God a blood sacrifice from the firstlings of his flock.

Where did the idea of blood sacrifice originate? I believe the blood sacrifice originated from God and is first seen after Adam and Eve sinned. God himself sacrificed an animal so he could provide a covering for Adam and Eve. (**Genesis 3:21**)

Abel's offering is described in **Hebrews 11:4**, "**(he) obtained witness that he was righteous". Abel's offering a blood sacrifice was a witness he had faith in the Lord and he was righteous. God accepted Abel's offering.**

We are not told how God showed acceptance of Abel's offering but this was obvious to Cain and Abel. God made a difference between them. Perhaps it was like Elijah's sacrifice when fire fell from heaven and consumed Elijah's sacrifice proving Jehovah is God. (**1 Kings 18**). There are examples in the Bible where God demonstrates his acceptance of an offering by sending fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice.

Abel was enabled by God to understand blood sacrifice is the proper way to approach God. This faith is seeing: an ability to see God's order. People mistakenly think faith is getting from God, whether it be blessing, or healing, or material needs. However, real faith is not getting something from God. It is rather seeing what God already provided. By making a blood sacrifice offering Abel proved he saw God's order and this offering witnessed Abel's righteousness by faith. Those whom God choose hear and see in the spirit.

Blood sacrifice did not make Abel righteous: it proved he was righteous by faith. He had eyes in his spirit to see and understand God. All born again Christians have spiritual eyes and ears.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 16:17)

God gives us spiritual eyes which we use to see spiritual things. This seeing is faith.

The Holy Spirit is careful in the text to point out the difference in the offerings brought by these two brothers.

Remember this is the first example of a principle running through the entire Bible. It is important to learn this principle in order to understand end times prophecy.

The principle is this: these two brothers were of one house. They were of the house of Adam which was a household of faith in God. One brother was of the Spirit; the other brother was of the flesh. One was of faith; the other of unbelief. One lived according to God's order; the other lived on his own terms.

The brother of the flesh killed the spiritual brother.

Nothing has changed throughout history.

In every example of a pair within a household or within a certain category there is always one of the flesh and one of the Spirit.

This applies whenever we see a pair in scripture that it is a picture contrasting between flesh and spirit, faith and unbelief, love and murder.

Examples of this principle include Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot, Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, Israel and Judah, Saul and David, and Martha and Mary.

Understanding this principle helps us grasp the meaning of verses like **Matthew 24:40**, "**Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.**"

This is speaking of one person who is of the flesh, and one who is of the Spirit; yet these two are both in one house, or in one category of people.

Understanding this principle helps to interpret the parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25. Ten virgins. Five wise, five foolish. Evenly divided into two even though these two elements belonged to one group of virgins. The wise go with the master when he returns but the foolish are shut out. What is the difference? The foolish brought their lamps. The wise brought their lamps and some oil with them.

If we compare this with what we have covered concerning the different types of manna in scripture we can easily see that the lamp is the word of God and the oil is the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 3:6**, "**Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**"

The foolish virgins had the letter that killeth, but the wise virgins had the word with the life-giving Spirit. There is a big difference between those who have bible doctrines, and then those who live, move and have their life saturated by the Word of God himself.

I realize this implies there will be people who claim they are Christians, who may mistakenly think that they are Christians, but will be left behind at the catching away (rapture, harpazo) of the church. This is exactly what I am saying. I pray those who read this will cultivate a fear of God, examine yourself, and be inspired to live an overcoming Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Abel represents the brother who lived in the Spirit and who had spiritual eyes to see God's order. He offered a blood sacrifice which looks forward in faith to the blood shed by the Lamb of God Jesus Christ. By faith Abel offered his sacrifice and by doing so he submitted himself under God's order.

16. Abraham's Sacrifice

Hebrews 11:17-19, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Genesis 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

On one hand, Abraham was promised a son and not just any ordinary son. He was promised a son through whom the nations of the world would be blessed. On the other hand, the same God who makes this promise told Abraham to sacrifice this same son, his only begotten son Isaac.

The scene of Abraham and Isaac is a clear picture of the heavenly Father and his only begotten Son Jesus.

Was Abraham's obedience prophetic? Did this obedience point to someone greater than himself and Isaac? The history of this incident is recorded, and eventually the Lord Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. Abraham and Isaac were a shadow of the real sacrifice which took place on Calvary.

Peter tells us these prophets realized these visions pointed to something which would be fulfilled later. The angels told Daniel to close the book because the visions he saw would be for the last days.

Abraham, in offering Isaac, took on the role of a priest. This was before Moses, Aaron, and the Levites who were later under the law.

Abraham was an example of a priest offering to God in simple obedience and faith. His blood offering pointed to the blood shed by the Lamb of God.

Abraham demonstrated he heard God's voice by obeying what God said and offering the blood sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

When Abraham and Isaac were on the way to the mountain to make the sacrifice, Isaac asked the question, "Where is the sacrifice?"

Abraham assured Isaac God would provide the offering himself. God did provide Abraham with a ram to sacrifice instead of his son but in a larger sense God provides himself as the sacrifice in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

Abraham reasoned within himself God would raise Isaac from the dead. This shows how much faith Abraham had that he saw God's order in this manner. Abraham heard God's voice and he could see God's order.

Hebrews 11:9-10, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

In this man's life we see glimpses of redemption, and we also see the consummation of God and man in New Jerusalem.

Abraham was a prophet. His life prophesied God's plan for the ages. He was also a priest.

Romans 4:20, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God".

17. Aaron The Priest

In **Exodus 4:27** the Lord spoke to Aaron instructing him to meet his brother Moses. Together Moses and Aaron received instructions on God's plan for delivering Israel out of Egypt.

In each miracle God instructs Moses to tell Aaron to perform some action, like lifting up his rod, and the Lord performed miracles to convince Pharaoh. The more judgment Pharaoh witnessed the harder his heart became. This will be the same in the latter days. The more judgment descends the harder an unbeliever's heart becomes.

Exodus 19:6, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

It was God's intention they all would be priests unto God. It eventually worked out that only certain people in Israel were separated as priests. Let us not forget, however, God's original plan. The Lord desires a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

God gave instruction to Moses to take Aaron his brother and also Aaron's sons to be priests. (**Exodus 28:1-2**). Exodus 28 describes the robes, uniform, and all of the ornaments the priests wore "for glory and for beauty". Exodus 29 describes the consecration of the priests.

In **Exodus 32** the people became impatient with Moses and approached Aaron. They wanted a plan of action. We see here temptation for those in ministry, especially religious leaders. Aaron fell into the temptation of prestige before the people. He cared what the people said or thought about him. This is also the fear of man.

Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Prestige and fear of man is deadly for a minister. We see here the immediate manifestation of a corruption of the priest, the immediate result being idolatry, covetousness, and sexual immorality.

When the church, which is the priest in day two, corrupts herself she sets up a false gospel and promotes idolatry with a spirit of covetousness and leads God's people into a party spirit resulting in promiscuity and sexual immorality.

The aspect of the world system which is the distortion of the priest is the business world. The more corrupt a church is the more it will resemble the business realm in the world system with a focus on money, position, and power.

Churches and ministries go astray with idolatry because of impatience. It takes time to sit before God, to pray, to study the scripture, and to hear God's voice. God's work is never carried out hastily or with impatience. A man of God must learn to deny himself, refuse to make agreements with the world, and learn not to make a name for himself. This is very difficult and hard work.

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29)

When Aaron fell into sin what was the first thing he did? He took up an offering.

Ministries born out of the will of man put their own needs first and will make provision the focus of the work. We need to be careful to avoid this. Money doesn't buy ministry or the work of God. (**Acts 8:20**)

The Levites were assigned to Aaron and Aaron's sons for the purpose of maintaining the tabernacle of the congregation. The Levites camped around the tabernacle. They were exempt from the general census of Israel, but after they were assigned to Aaron they were counted in Numbers 3.

As an aside, counting people represents bringing people under authority and control. One of the methods the government uses to control a population is through taking a census. This is one possible reason the Lord was angry with David when he performed a census. (**1 Chronicles 21:1**) David was a type of the Messiah and the Messiah does not force people into submission through manipulation using numbers.

Another way people are brought into bondage and submission is through giving a person a title or a certificate. This brings a person into bondage to the world system. Mark this down. The enemy uses numbers and names to control people. This is why the number and name of man is so prominent in the last days because it is a way to manipulate and control a population. (**Revelation 13:18**)

Devils enlarge their influence through numbers. When Jesus cast the demons out of the man in the Gadarenes he asked the devil his name.

It said "Legion, for we are many." (**Mark 5:9**)

This is the principle of a world system the enemy attempted to construct at Babel. (**Genesis 11:4**) They make a name, independent of God, and magnify their name through numbers.

(Notice they did not want to be scattered, but they wanted to gather together as one so their numbers would be magnified.)

When I think about this it makes a chill go down my spine when I consider how churches number people and send statistics on baptisms and memberships to authority over them. This process reeks of the worldly principle of control Jesus explicitly forbade the church from imitating. (**Matthew 20:25-26**) This is the principle of the world, and is how the enemy operates. I attended a church where a man would use a clicker during the service to count heads. It made me cringe, though at that time I did not understand why I was grieved by this.

Let's also consider that "denominations" are also the world system. Paul makes it clear dividing the church using names is carnal in **1 Corinthians chapter 3**. Why is it we are determined to elevate names, even to the point of dividing the church and separating ourselves from fellowship with other believers in Christ? Why is this so common, so ingrained in people? We should consider this is a part of the nature of the serpent grafted into mankind during the fall in the Garden of Eden. We became one with the serpent.

It is the serpent who desires to make a name. It is the serpent who desires to separate over names of men and create denominations. It is the serpent who causes men to divide themselves over systematic theologies created by men.

Is it possible a man can love systematic theology and not love Christ Jesus the Lord?

I have been earnest to make sure my doctrine is correct but I did not consider the thought that I could possibly love systematic theology more than the Lord Jesus himself.

This is apparent in brothers who stoop to the level of arguing with others over systematic man-made theology.

Paul the apostle rebuked Peter but not over systematic theology. This reproof sprang out of a concern for the heart of the gospel of grace. We should ask ourselves if our arguments are over the gospel or over our favorite systematic theology.

May the Lord give us a vision of unity in the body of Christ so we will deny ourselves, deny our names, and come together under the name of the Lord Jesus.

One may think an exhortation like this echoes the world which desires to unite under the banner of the Antichrist. We who live in the last days are sensitive to new world orders, one world governments, and one world religions (as we should be).

In order to protect ourselves from this one world unity delusion we put on the armor of systematic theology. Is this the armor of God we need? I don't think systems of theology will protect anyone from deception in these last days.

What will protect us and keep us is a love for the truth (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), a special love and burning passion for the Lord Jesus.

You may ask, however, which "Jesus" do I mean? (**2 Corinthians 11:4**) Do you mean the Jesus of the Mormons, the Jesus of the Jehovah Witnesses? What Jesus do you mean? There are so many false gospels, so many false spirits, so many false teachers preaching their spirit guides as Jesus.

I can say with confidence the Lord knows those who are his. (**2 Timothy 2:19**)

The Lord Jesus has sheep and those sheep hear his voice. (**John 10:27**) If we belong to him, then we know it. We will not listen to the voice of strangers. (**John 10:5**)

We are not kept in the faith by amassing piles of systematic theology, but we are kept by knowing the voice of the Lord Jesus. He speaks to us, and we know it is him. Those who know him will be strong and do exploits. (**Daniel 11:32**)

When Israel, out of unbelief, failed to enter the promised land there were certain Levites who rose up in rebellion against Aaron and Moses. This is called Korah's rebellion. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were the central ring leaders in this rebellion.

This account describes what I'm talking about in regard to men causing division in the church and wanting to exalt a name other than Jesus. People want a name to be exalted over their brethren.

This is covered in **Numbers 16-17**. In these chapters we see God brings judgment and destroys everyone who was a participant in this rebellion. They were swallowed up by a sudden sinkhole that closed up over them. Also, the 250 Levites holding censers the Lord killed. Their censers were saved and made into a memorial of warning for Israel.

In order to prevent further rebellion the Lord had them do a test using the staffs, or rods, of the leaders of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. God proved Aaron was his priest when Aaron's rod budded and bore fruit of almonds. This staff of Aaron that budded was included afterward within the Ark of the Covenant.

By this time there were the tables of law, the golden pot of manna, and finally Aaron's rod that budded, all included in the Ark of the Covenant.

One thing is clear from Aaron's history: God has a specific order in his administration.

Aaron was called as a priest for Israel. He and his sons were the first priests in Israel. Despite Aaron's failure in regard to the golden calf it did not change the fact Aaron was a priest for God. The calling of God is without repentance. God's calling upon a man does not change, even if that man fails.

Also, we see when men who are not chosen by God take upon themselves the ministry it brings judgment, death, and destruction upon God's congregation.

18. The Levites

The Levites assisted the priests with the setup and take down of the tabernacle of the congregation which contained the holy place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

The Levites distinguished themselves from the other tribes during the incident with the golden calf. The people enticed Aaron into creating a golden calf, and fell into idolatry, covetousness, and sexual immorality. (**1 Corinthians 10:6-11** has a detailed overview and application of this history.)

When Moses returned from the mountain he found Israel in rebellion. He was angry and threw down the stone tablets God wrote on and he broke them. Moses stood at the gate to the camp and called everyone who was on the Lord's side to join him. The tribe of Levi heard the call and rallied to Moses and to the Lord. During this time of backsliding and disobedience Levi separated themselves unto the Lord.

As a result, the Lord had Moses set apart the tribe of Levi. The Levites did not have their own campsite, but camped around the tabernacle of meeting. They were given the job of setting up and taking down the tabernacle whenever Israel moved to a new location in the wilderness. They were the assistants to Aaron and Aaron's sons. The priests were in charge of supervising the Levites in their work with the tabernacle of meeting.

The lesson here is that when we separate ourselves to the Lord he separates us for his work. When we abandon ourselves to the Lord he uses our lives to fulfill his purpose.

2 Timothy 2:20-21, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

The Levites did not receive a land inheritance in the promised land as the other tribes of Israel did. Their inheritance was the ministry of the tabernacle of meeting. They also received a tenth as a tithe from the tribes when they brought their offerings unto the Lord.

Levites demonstrate how important it is to have people helping in ministry. I notice in Paul's letters he included people working with him and those who helped him in the ministry. (**2 Timothy 4:11**)

Ministers need people to pray, support, and assist in the work.

In the New Testament every believer in Christ is a priest unto God. We all have direct access to God and the throne of his grace through the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ once for all. There is only one mediator between God and man and that is the man Christ Jesus. (**1 Timothy 2:5**)

The Levites were helpers in ministry and there are people in the body of Christ, as well, with gifts for helping and administration, encouragement and giving, and showing mercy. We need

every part of the body of Christ doing each part their job so the entire body can be built up and strengthened. No part is less important than the others. We are all in this together to magnify and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

19. Hebrews

Hebrews teaches us the Lord Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He is exalted over angels, Moses, and Jewish religious ordinances.

God spoke in time past by the prophets to the fathers but has now in these last days spoken to us by his Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Does this mean we no longer have prophets? **Ephesians 4:11-12** makes it clear the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are gifts to the church for the building up of believers.

Also Paul makes another list in **1 Corinthians 12:28**, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

In Hebrews Melchizedek is mentioned. This man is an example, a similitude, of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus. This is mentioned in Psalm 110:4, "**The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.**" The writer in Hebrews builds on this to demonstrate the priesthood of the Lord Jesus is superior to the Jewish priesthood. God demonstrated the old priesthood was done away when the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom. (**Matthew 27:51**)

The Old Testament priesthood was a temporary system in place until the time God brought forth his Son to be high priest forever. Jesus is not only the high priest but the Lamb slain for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus fills every role priests foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

The Lord Jesus is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. The superiority of this priesthood is demonstrated in that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoils of war. Melchizedek blessed Abraham and the lesser is blessed by the greater. Here we see the superiority of the Lord Jesus in every way.

Some may believe Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate manifestation of the Lord Jesus. It is not necessary to believe this, because the writer of Hebrews makes it clear Melchizedek is a similitude of Jesus. Was Abraham's only begotten son Isaac Christ? No, but he was definitely a similitude of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In the same way, Melchizedek also is a similitude and an example of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus opened a door by his priesthood so we can now come directly to the throne of God's grace to receive grace and mercy to help us in our time of need. (**Hebrews 4:16**) There is no longer need for an earthly priesthood which offers sacrifices or stands between the believer and God the Father. We can now approach God's throne with confidence because of the blood of Jesus.

Jesus makes intercession for us. He is at the right hand of God the Father and lives forever to make intercession for us.

Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

It is by faith in the finished work of the Lord we enter God's rest. God's rest is a completed work in eternity.

We enter by faith in what Jesus accomplished. As we stand on this sacred ground, we experience God's Spirit bringing these truths into reality in our daily lives.

We truly experience a conscience cleansed through the blood of Jesus. We truly experience deliverance from our carnal self, deliverance from the power of sin, and victory over the world and the devil. We have victory over death itself. We can be and will be and are even now swallowed up in the life of the Lord Jesus and his resurrection.

Hebrews 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

We enter by faith into God's finished work for us. We approach God by faith. This is the only way. We are saved, kept, and transformed from glory to glory by faith in Christ alone.

We lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and keep looking unto Jesus who is the author and the finisher of our faith. (**Hebrews 12:1-2**)

Let's not be discouraged when we experience hardship and difficulties, but consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. (**Hebrews 12:3**)

Hebrews 13:13-15, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

20. New Testament Priest

The work of priests is reconciliation between men and God. The entire religious system of sacrifices pointed to the Lamb of God.

Now Jesus is risen, ascended to heaven, and seated at the right of God the Father. He lives forever making intercession for his people.

Until the Lord Jesus returns we are in day two of God's three days. Day two is the day of the priest; it is the day of the church.

1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

This scripture is for every Christian who reads, understands, and believes the Bible. We are priests unto God. We do not need a man functioning as a priest for us. We are all priests and demonstrate this by praising God, by prayer, and by proclaiming Jesus.

When Pentecost arrived in Acts the Holy Ghost fell upon the apostles and the disciples who prayed in an upper room. The church was born. Jesus told them to wait until they were endued with power from on high. They became witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

A royal priesthood was born. Day two of God's three days began. On this day we are priests proclaiming Jesus and interceding in prayer. **Acts 6:4, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."**

The church, in one sense, always existed. The remnant in Israel was the spiritual church and the remnant in the church is spiritual Israel. Israel, the church, and the kingdom are one. In the same way Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God so also Israel, church, and the kingdom are one.

These three days are God expressed in different aspects. There is only one God, and there is only one family of God. There always were and will always be just one family of God. They were the remnant in Israel, they are the remnant in the church, and will be the remnant out of the nations in the kingdom. It is important to understand God is three in one, and believers are three in one as well. God is prophet, priest, and king. God dispenses himself; he does not divide time.

An understanding of the character and nature of God gives a man understanding of time, space, and the universe. The heavens declare the glory of God.

Currently we are at the end of day two. We are standing on the threshold, on the very cusp of day three. Our foot is halfway through the door into day three.

In day two we are given God's word, the Lord Jesus, and we are given God's Spirit. As we walk in the Lord and in the Spirit we enter the eternal realm of the finished three days. When we do this we see God's kingdom in our lives. We cast out devils in the name of Jesus. We lay hands on the sick and they are healed.

We speak God's word and overcomers hear it. **John 8:47, "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."**

They walk in faith, in the Spirit, and experience victory over self, sin, the world, the devil, and death itself.

When we live like this in Jesus we build the church. We are stones fitted together with other Christians and rise as a holy temple in the Lord.

Our job is to believe in Jesus and intercede in prayer. Without prayer there is no victory in proclaiming God's word. We enjoy the presence of Christ every day. The more we enjoy the Lord the less power the world has over us. The more we soak in his presence, the more the enemy cannot stand to be around us.

I said to my wife one day: "*We usurp the powers and principalities of darkness! In the kingdom the air is cleansed of their presence, and the church reigns in their place. There is no place for the evil one and his fallen angels in the kingdom.*"

In day two we battle powers and principalities through prayer and intercession. We do not know all we accomplish in prayer but we know this battle in prayer is of utmost importance.

The church is built through prayer and proclamation of God's word. We make disciples, give them God's word, and send them out to multiply as much as their faith can sustain them.

We build, encourage, and comfort the church. (**1 Corinthians 14:3**) We are gathering together with Jesus and in His name. Let us pray the Lord gives us a heart for him, a love for the church, and that we will be a part of building and not a part of tearing down. (**Proverbs 14:1**)

We are given the ministry of reconciliation. This is outlined in **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**,
"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Now we are New Testament priests carrying good news. This good news is God reconciled us to himself through Jesus. Reconciliation is a work God has done for us. God himself places us into Christ. **1 Corinthians 1:30**, "**But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**".

The wrath of God was poured on the Lord Jesus. God crushed him. God's wrath is satisfied by the death of Jesus. We are justified by the blood of Jesus. We are justified by his death, burial, and resurrection. It is through his work we are justified and made holy.

Anyone who works for their salvation does not understand the finished work of Jesus. If we think we can obey the law and earn salvation we have erred. We do not yet know or understand the finished work of Christ.

I've heard some believe Christ's work forgave their sins and now they obey Old Testament law. Paul addresses this clearly in the book of Galatians. Having begun in the Spirit are we now made perfect by the law? Paul said those who teach we should obey the law after salvation have fallen from grace. This is another false gospel and receives God's curse. They do not understand what Christ accomplished for them. We are not made holy or sanctified by observing Sabbath days or following religious rules. The remnant is not set apart by obedience to law or commandment. The remnant is set apart by grace and God's election.

Colossians 2:16-17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

The message of reconciliation is sidetracked by legalists, Pharisees, and religious hypocrites. There are false teachers preaching another gospel. They do not preach the gospel of grace.

We must wrap our arms tightly around the message of reconciliation and God's grace. We are living in the day of grace. God sends ambassadors to proclaim God reconciled the world to himself through the Lord Jesus.

If a man is in Christ he does not need anything else. We are given everything we need for life and godliness.

2 Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue".

Do not add to this message and do not take away from it. (**Revelation 22:18-19**)

People add and subtract from the good news of God's reconciliation through the Lord Jesus. People add systems, traditions, rules, guidelines, steps, and on and on. All we need is the simplicity of Christ Jesus. (**2 Corinthians 11:3**) We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (**Philippians 4:13**)

The message of reconciliation is attacked in a lot of ways. One way is to try and lead people back into Judaism or into becoming "Hebrew" Christians. We do not need to study Judaism or Hebrew roots in order to understand God's message of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ, not ambassadors for Judaism or religion. Jesus is a real person. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

Another attack on the gospel is adding man-made systems like Alcoholics Anonymous and the Big Book. When a believer in Jesus sits down in a circle and confesses he is an addict or an alcoholic he is making an agreement with a lie.

What does the Bible say?

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

We need to choose who we are going to serve: religion or Jesus.

When did everything pass away and become new? Right now, at this very moment, if a man will believe!

If we believe right now in Jesus who was crucified, who died, who was buried, and who rose again on the third day; if we believe, even right now, then we are a new creation in Christ.

We no longer need to confess to be anything but a Christian! We can be confident the good work Jesus started in us he will carry it on to completion until the day he returns. (**Philippians 1:6**)

There is only one gospel. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for I know from experience it is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

Do not be seduced by another gospel!

Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed".

21. Finished Work Of Christ

Reading the New Testament teaches us about the finished, completed work of Christ Jesus. The reason we call this "the finished work" is because it is complete. There is nothing else which needs to be done in order for man to receive forgiveness of sins and to be saved from self, sin, the world, the devil, the lake of fire and death. Nothing else needs to be done to complete this. We simply believe the testimony that Jesus Christ is God's Son.

Jesus is the Son of God. By believing in the name of Jesus we receive eternal life.

John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Some start out well believing the simple good news. They believe in the name of Jesus, they call on the name of the Lord, and receive forgiveness of sins. Unfortunately people quit believing after that.

After believing they turn to some kind of system. We are naturally prone to unbelief and it suits us to follow a program rather than walking by faith. We think the gospel is for children and we are smarter than Sunday School lessons. Human pride causes us to depart from the gospel of Jesus.

If we remain in the word we soon discover Christ has done so much! When Jesus died on the cross he said, "**It is finished.**" (**John 19:30**)

This is a testimony that everything required for salvation is accomplished. The Lord Jesus saves us from our sins, from ourselves, from the power of sin, from the world, from the devil, from death, and from the lake of fire which is the second death.

I will examine here each of these facets of the finished work of Christ.

Forgiveness Of Sins

When Paul gave his conversion testimony he quoted the words the Lord Jesus spoke to him.

Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Paul never forgot these words. He continued to repeat this message in his letters.

Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"

Colossians 1:14, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"

John also repeats this message in his letter.

1 John 2:12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

We can rest assured the finished work of Christ redeems us and provides forgiveness of sins.

Here is a list of scripture verses related to the forgiveness of sins: **Psalm 103:3; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:38; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 1:14; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 2:12**

Deliverance From Self

We see the finished work of Christ provides forgiveness of sins. Now we turn our attention to another aspect of Christ's work: deliverance from self.

In the Bible, "self" is also described as a "carnal" man, the "old" man, or the "flesh". This is basically the serpent grafted into man when Adam and Eve fell. It is the poison of the snake, running through the bloodstream of every son and daughter of Adam and Eve.

When Jesus told his disciples to "deny yourself and take up your cross" this principle of denying self is in view. This refers to man's self or serpent nature.

Self represents living life according to our own understanding. This is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The main characteristic of self is pride.

It is necessary to deny yourself to become an overcomer. A person cannot become one with Christ until they deny self. They might call on Jesus' name, they might receive forgiveness of sins, but they cannot experience consistent moral victory without denying self. They live a frustrated Christian life and bear no fruit for God's kingdom.

The necessity of denying self is stated by Jesus.

Matthew 10:38-39, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Matthew 16:24-25, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Mark 8:34-35, "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Luke 9:23-24, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

When something is repeated like this it is fundamental and crucial to the Christian life. Once we understand the necessity of denying self how do we proceed in accomplishing this? We overcome self in the same manner we receive forgiveness of sins. We are delivered from self by faith in the finished work of Christ.

We see this through Paul in **Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."**

These verses are succinct and carry a weight of truth to set us free from self.

I said previously the main characteristic of self is pride. Imagine self is a beast who beats on his chest like a gorilla and declares "I am". This is an accurate picture of self. The more satanic version of this is when people say, "I am god". This is satanic and carries the essence of the serpent.

We can scarcely comprehend how infected the human race is with the poison of the serpent. Our self, or serpent being, is an outpouring and manifestation of Satan. No wonder Jesus said, "Unless you deny yourself you cannot be my disciple". It is literally impossible because Jesus is the opposite in nature from the serpent and fallen man. Philippians 2 outlines the character and quality of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:6-8, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Remember God revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush: what was his name? I Am That I Am. Paul therefore says in **Galatians 2:20**, "I am crucified with Christ." Can we see this? It is becoming one with Christ in crucifixion which deals the death blow to self. We no longer live for self but for him who died for us and rose again.

God himself took us out of Adam and placed us into Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption".

God himself placed us in Christ Jesus. It is nothing we have done. God did the work!

We are crucified with Christ. Our "I am" was crucified with Christ. The self was given a death blow on the cross. We are set free from self now. We were set free to deny self, take up the cross daily, and live in Christ Jesus. He lives his life through us now.

There is much wisdom here in respect to denying self. Remember Philippians 2 says he made himself of no reputation. Jesus did not do anything in his own name during his earthly ministry. He did everything in his Father's name. It was only when he was approaching the cross Jesus taught his disciples to operate in the name of Jesus.

We must also, as Jesus demonstrated, deny our name and reputation and take on the name of Jesus just as Jesus took on the Father's name. We cannot make a name for self and take on the name of Christ at the same time. It is just impossible.

It was God the Father who made a name for Jesus. He spoke as a voice out of the cloud on the mount and said, "**This is my beloved Son, hear him!" (Mark 9:7)**

God might make a name for us if it is in the interest of the gospel. He might do this for the sake of the gospel. But we must never, never, never seek a name for ourselves. We must deny ourselves and take up the cross.

God took us out of Adam and put us in Christ. We are crucified with Christ. Each day this principle is at work in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He applies to us each day the finished work of Christ as we believe God's word and abide in Jesus. If we do not abide in Jesus we will be cut off from him. We abide in him by faith every day, looking unto Jesus the

author and the finisher of our faith. We proclaim him every day. I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live. Christ lives in me. My life is now in Christ. I am hidden with Christ in God.

The Holy Spirit gives the believer intuition in denying self daily. Many opportunities arise every single day for the believer to deny self. When these situations arise, the believer receives grace and power to deny self for the sake of Christ.

Worldly philosophy and psychology teach the opposite of the Bible on this subject. The world teaches people to put thought and energy into their self-image. The world teaches us to love self. The Lord Jesus always teaches us to deny self and carry the cross. Any philosophy of teaching outside Christ will emphasize love of self and self esteem. These teachings have the essence of the serpent, the father of pride, and the religion of self exaltation.

The path to overcoming self is to look away from self. Do not be bothered by past sin and failure or even your successes. Look away from self. Look unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith. Behold the Lamb of God. Consider him who endured. Ponder the Lord Jesus and allow our heart to fall in love with him more and more every day. He is all we need.

We must be disciplined to hate self, the serpent life, and to love Jesus with all of our strength.

When we see the revelation of Jesus Christ in glory we immediately hate self and take God's side and say Amen to his judgment that self is worthy of hellfire.

We fall down on our face and worship the Lord Jesus and cry out, "You are worthy, Oh Lord, to receive all glory, all honor, and all the praise. Oh Lord, you are worthy and I exalt you. I love you Jesus, I love you Jesus, I love you Jesus!"

Deliverance From Sin

Tied in and mixed completely with self life is the power of sin. We have learned Jesus washes away all of our sins in his precious blood. (**1 John 1:9**)

Beyond sinful actions (sins) we also inherit a sin nature from Adam. This sin nature is represented as the power of sin. There is a power of sin abiding in the natural man waiting for an opportunity to spring out and bring death. A person who does not believe in Jesus is completely controlled and enslaved by the power of sin. Their lives are dictated by the power of sin.

Here is a list of scriptures which deal with sin: **Genesis 4:7; John 1:29; John 16:8-9; Romans 3:9; Romans 5:12-13; Romans 5:20-21; Galatians 3:22; Hebrews 3:13; James 1:15; 1 John 1:8.**

This is a sample of scriptures which mention sin. Man inherited a sin nature from Adam and Eve. This sin nature brings about our eventual deaths. Also, this sin nature does not discriminate between those who are religious or not. Sin abides in every person who is born upon this earth. Every son or daughter of Adam and Eve inherits this sin nature. This power of sin is at work in our bodies and results in sickness, disease, and eventually death.

How do we overcome sin? Overcoming the power of sin is accomplished in the same manner as forgiveness of sins and deliverance from self. We overcome sin by reckoning ourselves dead with Christ in his death on the cross. I died with him. (**Romans 6**). When Jesus died on the cross I died with him and in him. When he died, he died to sin once and for all. As one stands on this truth the experience of deliverance from the power of sin will follow. Faith comes first. The result of faith is victory in Jesus.

1 John 5:4, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Sin shall not have dominion over you when you abide in the finished work of Christ.

Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." When you choose to believe God's word and stand in the finished work of Christ you experience power to rise above the sin nature.

Overcoming The World

The Lord has completed a finished work. We enter God's rest by faith in the finished work of Christ. We have covered scripture which points toward victory over sinful actions, self, sin nature, and now we want to look at overcoming the world.

What does it mean to overcome the world? We need to understand Jesus has already overcome the world. In Christ, by faith, we have overcome with him.

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Why do Christians have tribulation in the world? Overcoming Christians certainly will face tribulations. This word means difficulty or hardship.

John 15:18-19, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

It is very important to remember and to understand as an overcoming Christian the entire world is against you.

1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

This is not a passive indifference or apathy. The world aggressively attempts to conform us into its mold. (**Romans 12:2**)

Sadly many Christians willingly expose themselves to the world and give the evil spirit ample opportunity to infect their souls.

Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Every Christian must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, but do not be prideful and think we can outwit or beat the devil in an arm wrestle. Once we compromise, we have lost.

How do we overcome the world? In the same way as we receive forgiveness of sins and deliverance from self and sin. We overcome by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said he has overcome the world and in Christ we too have already overcome the world.

1 John 5:4-5, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Victory Over The Devil

The devil is our enemy. The enemy is a liar, a thief, the wicked one, a murderer, the accuser of the brethren, Satan, devil, Lucifer, serpent, dragon, the beast, a roaring lion, prince of the power of air, ruler of the world system, and can appear as an angel of light.

When we stand in faith upon the sacred ground of the finished work of Christ Jesus, we obtain forgiveness of sin, deliverance from self and sin, we overcome the world, and here we see we have victory over the enemy.

Here is a list of scriptures pertaining to the enemy and our battle: **John 12:31-32, Luke 10:18-19, Mark 16:17-18, 1 John 3:8, John 10:10, John 8:44, 1 John 4:4, Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

Ephesians 6 especially details we are in a spiritual warfare and we need the whole armor of God. We do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

We overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (**Revelation 12:10-11**). Our testimony is the completed, finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We proclaim the Lord Jesus (**Colossians 1:28**), and ourselves as one with him in crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and we are seated together with him in heavenly places. We are seated together with Christ (**Ephesians 2:6**), far above all principality and power of this dark world. We proclaim the victory of the Lamb of God. We announce everywhere we go the name of the Lord Jesus.

We overcome the enemy by living within, and under the name of Jesus; pleading the shed blood of Jesus; proclaiming the finished work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth; and taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. Amen.

Overcoming Death and Hell

The Lord has given us life through his name. When the Lord Jesus completed his work he gave us life and life more abundantly. As a result, we are delivered from death and from the lake of fire, which is the second death.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Also, the promise given to the overcoming Christian is that we will not be hurt by the second death. This second death is the lake of fire.

Revelation 2:11, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Revelation 21:8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

22. Distortion Of The Priest

What is the world?

The best definition I have found of the world is in **1 John 2:15-17**, "**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.**"

The three distinct parts of the world are: **(1) the lust of the flesh, (2), the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life.**

It is important for the overcoming Christian to memorize this and pray to the Lord for discernment, wisdom, and understanding.

The world system in its external machinery consists of: **(1) Government, (2) Business, and (3) Society.**

The Christian cannot escape this outward machinery of the world system.

Jesus prayed in **John 17:15**, "**I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.**"

This prayer of Jesus shows us there is a distinction between the evil world spirit and then the outward machinery of the world system.

Christians are called as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Christians should be salt and light in all these areas of outward world machinery and bring God's kingdom into them.

However, it is easy for a Christian to become entangled with this world system. Evil gives energy and heat to the machinery of government, business, and society. Evil is the gas in the engine. Satan is behind the wheel driving this wayward vehicle.

Christians are tempted in all areas of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Depending on where they work in this machinery, however, they become more prone to certain temptations from the evil spirit.

I want to focus on the area of the world system which is a distortion of the priest.

The entire world system is a distorted reflection of God's glory. I say it is distorted because the Bible clearly shows the world system hates God and God hates the world system. (**James 4:4**) Eventually God will destroy the world system. Everything in the world system is related to and influenced by Satan.

Ephesians 2:2, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Matthew 4:8-9, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

At one time Satan was a cherub named Lucifer. Pride was found in him and he fell along with one third of the angelic hosts. These now comprise the principalities and powers of darkness described by Paul in **Ephesians 6**.

When Lucifer was a cherub he saw the glory of God and took this knowledge with him when he fell. This knowledge was used when he constructed the world system which holds men in slavery and bondage.

In **Romans 13** Paul describes the worldly authority structures as being from God. Paul's exhortation to submit to authority is for the express purpose of bringing the gospel to every single person possible.

Paul warns Christians not to be rebellious against government authorities because at the present time we are servants in this world, demonstrating God's grace and mercy to people in the world in the hope of bringing people to salvation. We are also a demonstration to those principalities and powers and a testimony of their forthcoming overthrow and doom.
(Ephesians 3:10)

These worldly authority structures are Satan's counterfeit of what he saw of God's glory. The devil did not invent anything original. He copied what he saw and changed it so it would be used to enslave men rather than giving men freedom and liberty.

Despite this God allows these structures because of the hardness of men's hearts, just as he allowed the rise of King Saul when Israel demanded a king like the Gentile Nations.

Government came into being in **Genesis 9:5-6** when the Lord said murderers would be executed by other men. Executing murderers is the responsibility of the government. However, if mankind were not murderers there would be no need for this system.

These structures are a shadowy reflection of God's order and what he permits to be in place to protect fallen man from destroying himself. These structures in some way reflect the external, outward show of God's glory which Lucifer saw. Satan uses this system to suppress and destroy further the spirit in man, just as he also takes advantage of God's law to accuse and condemn men. The world system is a fake reproduction of something real in eternity. The world system is ultimately against God himself because it is a counterfeit and a copy. This is the same truth when it comes to man-made religion and is true of that Wicked One, the anti-Christ, who will come and embody Satan.

The world system is an upside down and inside out reflection of the glory of God. This is why this current world system can sustain man's outward, physical life but it suppresses and destroys man's spiritual life. Satan's emphasis is making sure man is preoccupied always with self by creating a system which forces him to constantly be looking out for himself. This system completely suppresses loving one's neighbor and loving God.

At times men are able to push the system more towards God when the majority of the population are believers and have the wisdom of the scriptures.

However, the more ignorant people become, the more controlling and oppressive the world system becomes. The power of the world system is directly held in check by the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As sin grows in strength in America we will see more and more direct confrontations between the outward church and the world system.

When the church loses its power and spiritual authority then the world system gains strength and people suffer.

The business world is a distortion of the priest. Remember, we have **(1) Government, (2) Business, and (3) Society** as the machinery of the world system. Government is a distortion of the prophet. Business is a distortion of the priest. Society is a distortion of the king.

The priest parallels the church and day two of God's three days.

The business world can be generally dissected into three parts as well: (1) Executives, (2) HR, Legal, and Payroll, and (3) Employees.

The business world, like government, is seen as a whole structure unto itself.

The work of the priest is intercession and reconciliation.

The business world accomplishes a parallel task using the medium of money and numbers. They serve at the altar of money. They intercede with money. Employees submit to executives rather than executives being servants. This system is a shadowy reflection of God's glory as it relates to the priesthood.

To understand this we have examples from the Bible. There was a priest named Eli in Israel who had two sons, Hophni and Phineas, who were evil. They ate the fat of the offerings and committed sexual immorality with those they had authority over. (**1 Samuel 2:12-17**) This is a clear picture of what business executives are like in the world system.

The Christian in business, primarily Christians who are executives or business owners, are tempted by money. We covet what we see. This is the lust of the eyes. This is tied directly to business, money, idolatry, covetousness, and sexual immorality. These are the areas Christians in this area suffer with the most.

Another good example of this is Aaron's sin with the golden calf. This is another example of the corruption of the priesthood and the results of this corruption. (**Exodus 32; 1 Corinthians 10**).

For the unbeliever, as a business executive, these traits dominate and run their lives.

This is a very difficult place for a Christian to maintain a consistent walk of victory in the Lord Jesus, but it can be done. Nothing is impossible with God.

23. Pentecost

The early church understood the world system in a way the church today has completely forgotten. Instead of using faith as a magical power to conjure wealth the early church simply gave to one another as each had need. People did not consider their possessions as their own, but freely gave to one another as each person had need. I believe this is a glimpse into what the entire world will be like during the kingdom age on the third day.

As a new priesthood the priority of the church in the book of Acts was prayer intercession and the ministry of the word. As Jesus instructed them, they gathered together in the upper room and waited to be endued with power from on high. (**Luke 24:49**)

A result of this focus on prayer they were all in one accord and in one mind. They were living with one another in unity. (**Acts 2:1**)

Unity in the church is important for God's purpose to be accomplished. Some people talk of unity and some understand the importance of unity. However, any move toward unity is hindered by those who introduce false gospels.

Today the church is splintered into many different camps according to doctrines, distinctives, and divisions according to the names of men who were leaders in past revivals and also men who were theologians with followings.

There are too many of these divisions and denominations to even list.

Divisions have in common two characteristics I have been able to identify: **(1) Names, and (2) dead letter** exalted over the life giving Spirit.

Names

As I have mentioned before, one of the characteristics of a spiritual Christian is that he denies his own self. A person's name is a symbol of who they are and their reputation.

People who seek to make a name for themselves are not denying themselves. I doubt most of the names which head up denominations today – the person behind the name – probably did not seek a name for themselves. But this is what happens. Men are worshipers of self, so they will take the name of a man to identify themselves.

Jesus made this crystal clear in **John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."**

There is no doubt in my mind who Jesus was referring to.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-12, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (8-12) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The reason why people receive this man, the reason they worship him and accept him is because he comes in his own name! He glorifies and magnifies self! Men are natural worshipers of self, and they accept and worship a messiah of self.

This is tied in with the idea of making a name for one's self. Very subtle, very deadly indeed is the enemy of our soul. He has us worshiping him by adoring our own self, because this is his principle, his law, his essence. He is the father of lies, and those who refuse to die to self will be deceived. God himself sends strong delusion so that every man who has not received a love of the truth will be carried away. Pause a moment and think about that: if God deceives you, there is no hope. There will be no middle ground, no fence straddling, no way we can stand by passively. We must get all the way on the Lord's side, like the Levites did when Moses called out to all those who would stand with him at the gate of the camp.

We cannot allow ourselves to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but we must reprove them. (**Ephesians 5:11**) We must come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing. (**2 Corinthians 6:17**) We can no longer be yoked together with unbelievers and with religious hypocrites who name the name of Jesus but live like the world. (**2 Corinthians 6:14**) We must find fellowship with the true remnant, with overcomers in Christ Jesus who stand completely on the sacred ground of the finished work of Christ. By their fruits you shall know them.

The true remnant is not teaching us about observing the Sabbath. The true remnant is not preaching obedience to God's laws. The true remnant is teaching believers to stand on the finished work of Christ. These other groups proclaiming obedience to the law are modern day Pharisees and we need to stay far away from them. When the blind lead the blind they both will fall into a ditch.

Men are worshipers of self so they will take the name of a man to identify themselves. Oh, how terrible this is.

1 Corinthians 3:3-4, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"

This carnality is exposed here by the apostle Paul. How is it possible churches cannot understand this since we have this carnality exposed right here in the Bible? People do it anyway. I cringe whenever I hear someone identify themselves by a man's name or by the name of a denomination. Why not just be a Christian? Why do we need to add something which causes division in the body of Christ? Can we not see how grievous this is?

It is carnal, of the flesh, and according to the world system, and is also in line with the principle of Satan which will be revealed in the Wicked One.

When people seek a name for themselves they are following the same spirit which inspired Nimrod and his crowd to build the tower of Babel. Making a name for self is the world system.

Genesis 11:4, "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

It does not take a lot of discernment to hear the echo of Satan in the words of these people.

The purpose of making names is to bring men underneath us, to subject others underneath. We give ourselves names to exalt and magnify ourselves. With a name we have power. In our own name men accomplish much independently and separate from God. This is Satan's goal. To incite man to be independent from God, to exalt himself in government, business, and in society. But no one is ever told the name we give ourselves brings us into unspeakable suffering, sorrow and death.

Remember Israel wanted a king. They wanted someone with a name to lead them. But Samuel told them what would happen when they adopted this system. Their children would become slaves to this system. The king would bring them into bondage and they would be slaves of this king. King Saul is a foreshadowing of the antichrist.

This is the price we pay for making a name for ourselves – we become slaves to sin, self, and ultimately Satan.

This is the tragedy of church denominations. Every man wants to make a name for himself. By making a name for ourselves we separate ourselves from the body of the Lord Jesus. We separate ourselves from the head of the church. Why do men want to be servants of men? Because it is easier to serve a man than to serve God? In their hearts they themselves lust for position, power, and prestige. They follow because they desire to lead. They want their name to be exalted over their brethren.

Ah, what a tragedy we have in the church. No wonder revivals do not last. Every move of God lasts as long as it takes for men to begin asserting themselves, taking control, giving it a name and systematizing it into an organization and systematic theology. Once the move of God is given a name men take charge and the system is put in place. With every brick put in our towers we exalt ourselves against the God of heaven.

Dead Letter

The second reason for division in the church is men exalt the letter of doctrines over God's word and the present reality of Christ. It is hard to believe but there are some people who love doctrines more than they love Christ or their brothers and sisters in Christ. If they find a fellow Christian who does not go along with their doctrine they will part company with them.

It is true we need to have good, solid, biblical doctrine. Paul told Timothy in the last days men would depart from the faith giving heed to doctrines of demons.

The other extreme to this is Christians exalting doctrine to the point it becomes "the letter that killeth..." They are so right they are dead right.

2 Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The apostles in the early church walked in the authority of the kingdom. Why? Because they did not make a name for themselves. They denied themselves, took up the cross, and followed Jesus in laying down their lives. They had only one doctrine, and this was the gospel of the Lord Jesus. They were united in one heart, one mind, and one spirit.

Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." As they prayed in the upper room the Holy Ghost fell on them and they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. People saw what looked like tongues of fire on people. As a result of this power from on high these men walked in kingdom authority. They were given to eat of the hidden manna. (**Revelation 2:17**)

In **Acts 3** Peter and John proclaimed healing in the name of Jesus for the crippled man at the gate Beautiful. The man was healed immediately and a crowd gathered and they stared at Peter and John. But listen to what Peter said to them:

Acts 3:12,16, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man walk? (16) And his name (Jesus) through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

Notice Peter denied himself and proclaimed the name of the Lord Jesus. This is what the church needs to do. Deny self! Proclaim Jesus! The Holy Spirit must lead us once again. When I say this, I do not mean a pastor stops teaching God's word and surrenders a church service to pandemonium. What I mean is we must deny ourselves, and not seek to make a name for ourselves. We must approach the word of God with great humility and depend upon the Holy Spirit to speak through us for the building, exhortation, and the comfort of the church.

24. Intercession

The purpose of a priest is to be an agent of reconciliation between God and men. We no longer have a religious system of priests like in the Old Testament because all of these things were only a similitude pointing forward to the Lord Jesus. Now the Lord was raised from the dead on the third day and he is seated at the right hand of God the Father. The Lord Jesus is able to save to the utmost those who come to God by him because he ever lives to make intercession for us. (**Hebrews 7:25**)

As Christians we are one with Christ and receive the ministry of reconciliation. Part of this ministry is to proclaim the good news that Jesus has completed a work providing forgiveness of sins and deliverance from self, sin, the world, the devil, death and the lake of fire.

Another aspect of this ministry is the work of prayer and intercession. **Acts 6:4, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."**

Paul exhorts in **Ephesians 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints".**

He also wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing".**

The Lord Jesus spoke a parable about persistent prayer in **Luke 18:1, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint".**

One great example of intercessory prayer was the prophet Daniel in Daniel chapter 9. The prophet understood by books from Jeremiah that the Jewish people would be exiled from Jerusalem for seventy years. He realized this time had passed and so he turned to God in prayer and intercession for his people. His prayer is a good example of humility, repentance, confession, and intercession.

Daniel begins his prayer in **Daniel 9:4**, "O Lord, the great and dreadful God..." Daniel had a grasp on the fear of God in his life. He knew God in reality and in first hand experience.

For prayer to really be effective we must know God first hand. When we do know God first hand it instills a fear of God because he is a real person.

Think of reality like a bowl filled to the rim with water. The presence of God is like pushing an outside object, like a tennis ball, into that bowl until the water is overflowing. This is what the presence of God feels like.

His presence feels like the fabric of reality is pushed around to make room for a man more real than reality.

The effect of this upon the mind, spirit, and body is recognizable. I do not mean a person loses control and has a fit. **1 Corinthians 14:32-33**, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

I do mean, however, the presence of God is recognizable and is tangible and has a definite effect upon the conscious mind and upon physical reality. Often when Daniel received visions and revelations from the Lord he would be weak and sick for days afterward.

His presence shatters the illusion of this current reality we live in. Many times in the book of Daniel there are descriptions of how the revelation of God caused Daniel to faint, pass out, fall on his face, and to feel weak or sick for days afterward. Our physical bodies cannot bear to be in the manifest presence of the Lord without losing strength. The presence of the Lord is powerful and causes men to run away in fear. The presence of God comes to us out of eternity, outside of time and space, and his presence changes us forever.

We should be cautious when we see supernatural phenomena in crowds of people falling out "under the power". We should wonder if these men are getting back on their feet with a revelation from God in the order and magnitude of what Daniel the prophet had. We should be careful not to encourage these supernatural manifestations, because the enemy injects himself and deceives in this kind of situation. Does this manifestation produce a fear of God where a person prays, "O Lord the great and dreadful God"?

Daniel prayed to the great and dreadful God. He confessed his sins and the sins of his people. He acknowledged God's judgments are righteous and true. He prayed for God to show mercy for the sake of his own name. Daniel realized the basis of prayer is the very person of God himself. We do not pray according to our own righteousness for all of our righteousness is as filthy rags. (**Isaiah 64:6**). We pray according to the righteousness of God himself, and we plead with God according to his own name. A man who has been in God's presence will understand these things. He does not need to be taught to pray by anyone. The Lord himself teaches us how to pray.

In **Luke chapter 11** the disciples of Jesus asked him to teach them how to pray.

Luke 11:2-4, "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil."

This is a template prayer disciples can model all their prayers after.

The Lord's prayer is in **John chapter 17**. I encourage everyone to read over the prayer of Jesus. One thing I notice is how Jesus mentions several times the Father's name. Jesus prayed and lived and worked in the Father's name. We now live and pray in the name of Jesus, but as Jesus taught us and left us an example we pray unto our heavenly Father. Since Jesus rose from the dead God is now our Father as well as the father of Jesus. We are now brothers with Jesus. Jesus was once the only begotten Son. Now he is the firstborn among many sons of God. We are brothers with the Lord Jesus.

Hebrews 2:17, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren."

Hebrews 2:12, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

Hebrews 2:11, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren"

Another aspect of the prayer the Lord taught his disciples is in regard to forgiveness. We are encouraged to pray and ask Father God to forgive our sins. In the very next breath we see God's forgiveness for us has one contingency. We must also forgive every man who has sinned against us. Every man who is indebted to us we must set free. We are not allowed to hold a man's debt against him. If we do not forgive the debts others have to us the Lord does not forgive us the debt we have to him.

The truth is anyone who has really seen the Lord Jesus would not want to hold other people in bondage. The revelation of Jesus sets us free and we desire to set others free as well. When I hear of a Christian who holds bitterness or grudges against someone else it causes me to doubt they have encountered the Lord.

As a Christian, I desire to see others set free from sin, bondage, and the burdens this world system places upon us. How could I ever harden my heart towards someone else and refuse to forgive? Because the deceitfulness of sin can harden the heart. (**Hebrews 3:13**) We need to constantly be alert to the true condition of our heart before the Lord. It does not take very much for someone to harden their hearts.

Let's make sure there is no bitterness, hatred, or malice in our hearts. **Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from**

you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

If we have unforgiveness toward anyone we will not be able to pray in the Holy Ghost. Without the power of the Holy Ghost in our prayers we are just wasting our breath. If we regard iniquity in our heart the Lord will not hear us. (**Psalm 66:18**)

One of the most fundamental aspects, therefore, in order to intercede, is that we first of all forgive everyone. Don't wait for people to ask you to forgive them. Go ahead and tell God you forgive them. Proclaim forgiveness for every offender every time you pray. Sometimes when I pray I ask God to forgive people I do not know about who might sin against me. It is possible there might be someone out there who has slandered me or talked evil things against me. I go ahead and ask God to forgive them.

We need to guard our heart against bitterness. It is easy to live according to the knowledge of good and evil. This is the fruit Adam and Eve ate that brought death upon us all. Let's instead choose life and choose to bless those who curse us, and to do good to those who would spitefully use us. Let's live according to the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life. **Proverbs 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."**

Paul left us an example of intercessory prayer as well. Often in his letters to the churches he would give a brief outline of his intercessory prayers for the church. It is important we learn these prayers so we may adopt the attitude of Christ toward the church. We need to learn to go beyond praying for our own needs and pray for the church. This will change us so we are not focused on ourselves but our heart and mind are focused on the needs of others. In this way we can cultivate an attitude of being a servant. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. (**Philippians 2:5**) We start putting on the new man (**Ephesians 4:24**) and taking on the mind of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:16**) through prayer and intercession for the church (**Ephesians 6:18**).

There is a place for praying for the lost. Jesus asked his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers into the harvest field. (Matthew 9:37-38) These laborers are born out of the church. Therefore by praying for the church we can spiritually give birth to those who will go forth and evangelize in their family and workplace. This is all a very supernatural process which takes place in a very natural way. As the church is filled with life and revival each member will also overflow with the life of Christ and this is felt in the workplace and in mens' homes. This is true evangelism when the church is in revival.

Ephesians 1:15-19 provides us with points we can incorporate into prayer. It is a good idea, I think, to memorize this section so as to bring it into our prayers automatically. The points I see here are as follows:

Giving thanks. (verse 16) Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus (verse 17) Eyes of understanding enlightened (verse 18) Know what is the hope of his calling (verse 18) Riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (verse 18) Exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe (verse 19)

These are six points I see in Paul's prayer. There may be others the Lord can reveal to us as we pray these points for the church. I think we can actually use these points to pray for anyone, even those who do not know Christ. We can pray God will give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We can ask the Lord to show them what is the hope of his calling, his inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of his power toward those who believe.

A very important point I think we need to always remember is to give thanks for the people we are praying for. Giving thanks for people will soften our hearts towards them and create an opening for God's grace to work through us to touch that person. We are saved by God's grace. Some people may never feel or perceive this grace unless it is extended through us in our prayers for them, which will naturally also affect our attitudes, our words, and our spirit towards them. Let us give thanks especially for people who irritate us.

Ephesians 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here are scripture portions that contain more examples of the apostle Paul's prayers for the church: **Ephesians 3:14-20; Philippians 1:8-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3**

We could study each of these for a lifetime and still see more truth to incorporate into our prayers. We should become completely devoted to this work of interceding and praying for the church. This is the work the Lord called us to. Above and beyond anything else we need to learn to pray and intercede daily for ourselves but more importantly for the saints, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

25. The King

God is three in one. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is prophet, priest, and king. God is Israel, church, and kingdom.

God's people need to hear God's voice and not the voice of a man.

Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. We must learn we cannot follow men, no matter how godly or sincere those men are.

We are heading toward a time of great deception culminating in men worshiping a man who will hypnotize the whole world. This antichrist spirit will take advantage of religious systems which exalt the names of men. What we have seen already with charlatans is nothing compared to what is heading toward us.

It is time we learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Only those who have a special love for Jesus will survive spiritually in the years ahead of us leading up to the final organization of the antichrist system.

Jesus is returning as a thief in the night to receive a bride unto himself.

After the world no longer has salt or light it will be plunged into the darkest period of mankind's history on this earth.

As overcomers, however, we look past the brief seven year tribulation period. We look toward the arrival of God's kingdom on the earth. We eagerly await and look for the third day to begin.

26. The Day Of The Lord

The day of the Lord is so huge it could fill an entire book all on its own. Here I just want to touch on a few thoughts regarding the day of the Lord as it pertains to the third day.

There are so many opinions people have regarding the day of the Lord I think it would be helpful to only focus on facts we can clearly establish with a straightforward reading of scripture.

The day of the Lord is mentioned and prophesied about in the Old and New Testament.

The day of the Lord has much to do with God's wrath and judgment.

The day of the Lord is something the righteous are looking forward to with great hope and expectation.

I will examine a few scriptures.

Joel 1:15, "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come."

Joel 2:1-2, 10-11, 31, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; (2) A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. (10) The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: (11) And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come."

Joel 3:15-16, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

It seems these prophecies in Joel have dual or even triple fulfillment. One fulfillment took place during the time Joel lived in. There was a day of the Lord that was judgment that came upon Israel and Judah then. They were destroyed and carried away by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

In one sense this was the day of the Lord's judgment at that time for Israel. However, we quickly see Joel is also seeing a much bigger picture and meaning in this prophecy. Joel is seeing something in the heavens which Jesus also describes as being in the future, and also there is a description of the day of the Lord from John when he sees the vision of the revelation of Jesus Christ. We need to keep in mind with prophecy there can be dual fulfillment.

The darkness and gloominess in these prophecies definitely points towards God's judgment on the unbelieving world but also I see here a dual judgment on the unbelieving, sleeping church in the last days. Remember the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Five were wise, five were foolish. Now let's turn our attention to some scripture in the New Testament which speaks of the day of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-4, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

Paul's description of the day of the Lord puts it in terms of a thief coming in the night. The Lord himself describes his return as a thief in the night. However the return of the Lord in other scriptures speak of a day of the Lord when every eye shall behold him and people will be terrified.

I think this can be understood easily with what is called the rapture of the church. There will be an event, at some point, where Jesus will return and his people will be snatched up to meet him in the clouds.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

This describes Jesus returning for his people. This will be an invisible return of the Lord which is unseen by unbelievers. This is why it is described as a thief in the night. It is an unseen event to the world, like a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

There is a lot of activity associated with the day of the Lord. Men try their best to organize these events into a flow chart for easy understanding and explanation. I don't think there is an easy way to put all the events connected with the day of the Lord in a definitive chronological order. I'm skeptical of those who are dogmatic on these points.

The best I've been able to do is at least identify the chief characteristics surrounding the day of the Lord.

Jesus in **Matthew 24** expands more on the time period preceding to and leading up to the day of the Lord. The way Jesus describes it also lines up with the descriptions in the Old Testament.

We know this will be a time of terrible judgments falling upon sinful mankind. The world has never yet seen the horrors which will take place during this time.

John saw this and he recorded it for us in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation describes through spiritual visions the events which will take place upon the earth during the seven years of tribulation. I believe by the end of Chapter 3 of Revelation the overcoming church this side of the seven years, the bride of Christ, is taken out in the rapture. However, I believe there will still be many people on earth who claim the name of Christ, who consider themselves Christians, but who are left behind.

Remember the wise virgins and foolish virgins in **Matthew 25**. I have explained this elsewhere but it bears repeating again.

27. Remnant Overcomers

There is a remnant in Israel, a remnant in the church, and also a remnant among the nations during the kingdom age. All of these comprise one body of believers from beginning to end.

When considering the remnant I think in terms of one house with two brothers, or two sisters, or a paired element of some sort. Throughout the bible when two people are spoken of in one context it is usually to contrast the flesh and the spirit, or faith and unbelief.

Examples include: Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot, Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Israel and Judah, Saul and David, Martha and Mary, five wise and five foolish virgins, and also one taken and one left. In each example, the pair belongs to the same group or category, but one is of the flesh and one is of the spirit.

When we see this pattern in scripture it becomes even more pressing upon us to make our calling and election sure. Do we call ourselves a Christian but our lives are identical to unbelievers? What exactly is there in one's life which distinguishes a man from an unbeliever? One may say, "My faith in Jesus." But how is this faith seen in our life? Where is

the evidence in our daily life we are a Christian? Remember James' admonition: "**Even the demons believe in God, and shudder.**" (**James 2:19**)

We must continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We cannot rest on yesterday's confession, yesterday's faith, yesterday's prayers. Today is the day of salvation. We must believe in Jesus today.

Believing in the Lord Jesus is not a one time deal. Did a man pray at an altar one time? Good. Did a man get baptized once upon a time? Good. However, let me ask, is this man believing in Jesus today? Is there evidence in his life today he believes in Jesus?

The Lord is risen, He is alive. He is here right now. Let us turn to him now, forgetting those things which are behind us, and looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

There is a clear pattern in scripture of a brother in the flesh, and a brother in the spirit. With this in mind, consider the following scripture:

Matthew 24:40, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

I do not believe this verse and others like it describing this sudden catching away of people is contrasting believers and unbelievers. When we see a pair, it is a pair which belong to the same house. One is of the flesh, the other is of the spirit. The brother who is in the flesh is left behind, and the brother who is in the spirit is taken.

I realize how scary this sounds! I realize men have a hard time accepting this but I know it is the truth of scripture.

Why does Jesus exhort believers to pray they may be found worthy to escape? (**Luke 21:36**)
Why are we exhorted over and over to watch and pray, to be sober and be watching?
Brothers, we need to seriously examine ourselves in light of scripture.

I am not saying Christians left behind to endure the tribulation are lost or unsaved. The Bible makes it clear many Christians become overcomers during the tribulation and they pay for it with their lives.

We do not want to be left behind! Let us determine in our heart right now we will believe the finished work of Christ, and become one with Christ Jesus in his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Let us determine by God's grace to live an overcoming life in the Lord. Let us pray now God delivers us from every idol, every stronghold, every area of unbelief in our life. Let us pray now God fills us again and again with a new baptism in the Holy Ghost. Let us pray to God so we can hear God's voice calling our name.

It does not matter if people say "Lord, Lord"! All that matters is this: Does the Lord know my name? The devils said they knew Jesus and Paul but who are you? I plead with Christians to get down on our knees and ask God to revive us once again.

May the Lord be gracious to us, and shine his light upon us, that we may see the day in which we are living, not to be fearful, but so we take hold upon the hem of his garment and not let go until we hear his voice!

There has always been a remnant of true believers who were overcomers in their generation. There are many promises from the Lord to those who are overcomers in Revelation chapters 2-3. We will eat of the tree of life, will not be hurt by the second death, we will be given to eat of the hidden manna, we will have a white stone with a new name in it, we will be clothed in white raiment, our names will be in the book of life, Jesus will confess our names before the Father and his angels, we will be made a pillar in the temple of God, we will have the name of God, the new Jerusalem, and Jesus written on us, and we will reign and rule over the nations with Jesus. I think it is well worth our time to make sure before God we are overcomers.

Even though the Lord has made these wonderful promises to the overcomers, only a minority of people in Israel, church, and the nations will make it into this group. What does it take to get in?

It takes believing in Jesus. It means that we stake our entire life, name, reputation, and all we have on the name of Jesus.

I realize more and more every day it is all to the glory of God and his grace anyone is saved. I am thankful a brother recently pointed this out to me. Our lives outside of Christ are completely worthless, sin-ridden, caked with iniquity, and totally depraved.

The only hope we have is in the Lord Jesus. Even among those who take Christ's name, only a small minority comprise the remnant.

I believe it is God's purpose in this small group of believers to achieve what the entire household of faith is supposed to achieve. God chooses a small group in the house of faith. This is so no flesh can glory in God's presence. God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, he chooses the weak things to confound the strong, that no man can boast before the Lord. It is because of God alone we are now in Christ Jesus who has become for us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. (**1 Corinthians 1:26-31**).

God used Gideon and a remnant to bring victory.

God used the boy David with a slingshot to bring down giant Goliath.

God used a cross and the death of his dear Son to bring salvation and eternal life to everyone who believes.

We preach Christ crucified. This is foolishness to unbelievers and a message they cannot comprehend. The god of this present age, Satan, has blinded their minds against the gospel. **2 Corinthians 4:4**, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

The gospel remnant has always been in existence. From the time of Abel and on down there has been a righteous remnant of believers. There was a remnant of true believers in Israel, there is a remnant of true believers in the church which comprise the bride of Christ, and there will be a remnant taken out of the nations in the kingdom.

28. Hidden Manna

Revelation 2:17, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

When a Christian walks consistently by faith in the completed, finished work of Christ he experiences a growing authority in his everyday life situations.

To get a better understanding of spiritual authority we need to know who God is. There are foundational thoughts which need to be in place before we can appreciate the hidden manna in **Revelation 2:17**.

To understand hidden manna we need an overview of who God is.

God three in one: Father, Son, Holy Spirit: prophet, priest, king: Israel, church, kingdom.

There is a difference between man's view of time and God's view from eternity. The entire universe reflects the glory of who God is. It is mathematical in precision. The heavens declare the glory of God.

Time and space is understood by man in the form of seven days. One week is seven days. Man is given six days, and the Lord has the seventh day, which is also the third day from the perspective of eternity. This is the kingdom age and the Lord's day.

From an eternal perspective there are three days. God is three in one. There is one eternity in three days and those three days are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three days parallel Israel, church, and the kingdom. In each of the three days each component is at the same time present in the others. There is one part which is in the forefront while the other two support, and each one takes a turn in time and space.

Within Israel there was and is a remnant of the faith of Abraham, a people upon whom rests the spirit of prophecy. They believe in Jesus. Jesus said Abraham saw his day and rejoiced. This was the church within Israel, the true believing remnant within the larger whole. Also, this represents the brother who is of the Spirit.

There have always been the Gentile nations which are grafted in. Ruth is an example of this grafting into the very lineage of King David and King Jesus. The nations will receive special attention during the kingdom age. The Lord will reveal true spiritual authority to the earth during that day.

Also, within organized Christianity there exists a remnant of true believers. These are overcomers, the bride of Christ, of whom Jesus will receive unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The three days of God are Israel, church, and the kingdom.

At the current time in history we are at the very threshold of the kingdom age.

All of the three days contain the prophet, priest, and king, Israel, church, and the kingdom, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All of these are mingled into one another and are combined together. God is combined together as well: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each title, role, position, and dispensation are interwoven with each other.

After we have all this clear we can fill in to this structure where the hidden manna comes in.

When we read scriptures where manna is mentioned, we see there were two kinds of manna, and also some manna set apart in a golden pot by Aaron.

In **Exodus 16:31** the manna is described as tasting like honey. **Ezekiel 3:3** compares the eating of God's word to a taste of honey. Also in **Revelation 10:9-10** the prophet ate God's word and it tasted like honey. By comparing scriptures we can see this manna which tasted like honey was a picture of the word of God.

In the retelling of this history about the manna in **Numbers 11:7-8** the manna is described as tasting like "fresh oil". Throughout the Bible oil points to the anointing of the Spirit. In **1 Samuel 16:13** Samuel anoints David with the horn of oil and the Holy Spirit came upon David from that day forward. When we see the anointing oil in scripture it is a picture of the Holy Spirit and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

From this we see the two types of manna Israel consumed as God's Word and God's Spirit.

There is also a third type of manna. In **Exodus 16:33** Moses gives instruction that some of the manna be collected into a golden pot and put away in the Ark of the Covenant.

Now in order to understand what this hidden manna is we need to go back and consider God's three days from eternity.

The first day was Israel, even though within Israel we have a remnant of the faith of Abraham, and also there are Gentile nations in existence during the first day. Israel was given God's word in the law and the prophets. A simple overview of the Old Testament makes this point clear. Day one was also the day of the prophet. Israel is the prophet proclaiming God's word to the world.

In Day two we have the church. We also have Israel and the Gentile nations but God is expressing himself primarily through the church on day two (and the church is Gentiles and Jews who believe in Jesus!). What is the essence of the church? If Israel was the prophet then what is the church?

In the three days the church represents the role of the priest. Even though Christians are prophets, priests, and kings in this day two we work primarily in a capacity of reconciliation which is the priest.

We do not have literal kings like Israel did. Whereas there were literal prophets, priests, and kings in Israel in the church there are only literally prophets and priests. We intercede and proclaim the word of God.

We see now day one is related to the word, day two with the Spirit in intercession.

So what is Day Three going to be about? This brings me back to the hidden manna. The manna that tasted like honey is the word and the manna that tasted like oil is the Spirit. We are currently involved with the word and the Spirit in the church.

Day three is related to the hidden manna.

Another confirmation of this to me was when I looked at the contents of the Ark of the Covenant: (1) law of Moses, (2) Aaron's rod that budded, and (3) golden pot of manna. These three are in one Ark. The law of Moses was Israel. Aaron's rod that budded represents the priestly work of the church on day two. The golden pot of manna must be day three and the kingdom.

What is day three? Day three is the kingdom age. We have had the day of the prophet, the day of the priest, and soon we will have the day of the king!

The simplest interpretation of the hidden manna is kingdom authority.

Revelation 2:17 says the overcomer will eat of the hidden manna. This is a man walking in the word and in the Spirit who now stands in the finished, completed work of Christ. This man receives the authority coming out of God's kingdom and when he speaks God's word it is with the authority of life and death.

In the Ark of the Covenant the golden pot of manna represents the kingdom and kingdom authority.

What exactly is kingdom authority? There are two aspects of kingdom authority. One part has to do with power to cast out devils, heal the sick, and preach the gospel. This is the part of kingdom authority we see throughout the Gospels and the book of Acts. The other aspect of kingdom authority is a system of administration which is the exact opposite of the current world system we live in now.

Kingdom authority was manifested in the preaching of John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, and also the apostles. The gospel was preached to the poor, those considered as sinners unworthy of the attention of the religious elite of that day. Kingdom authority was seen when

Jesus and the apostles cast out devils. Also, kingdom authority was seen in Jesus and the apostles when they healed the sick of every disease.

Matthew 12:28, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come upon you." Jesus made it clear that casting out devils was a demonstration of kingdom authority.

The kingdom age is not until the third day, which is quickly approaching, but those who live and move in the presence of King Jesus obtain authority of that kingdom even now.

Mark 16:17-18, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Jesus never said those signs only followed apostles during the first century and then would cease once we had the written word of God. There is no indication anywhere in scriptures of this unless you are purposely trying to twist scriptures together to create that kind of systematic theology. We are still in day two like the early apostles and disciples were in the beginning of day two. How much more should we be moving in kingdom authority at the very end of the age?

Men teach the supernatural is passed away because there is no supernatural in their own lives and also they desire to control God's flock with their systematic theology. They should be careful they do not become the modern day version of the ancient Pharisee and Sadducee. Those ancient religious leaders were bible teachers and scholars as well but they completely rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said to them, "**Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me, And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**" (John 5:39-40)

These men used scripture as a system to control people and to profit financially off God's people. They probably produced all kinds of books on doctrines and wrote pamphlets and tracts. But it was all for their own name and profit.

On the other end of this we have people who want to only dwell in the supernatural all the time. They thrive off signs and wonders. Jesus rebuked them and said that an evil generation seeks after signs and wonders.

On one hand, we need to be careful not to put God in a box with systematic theology. On the other hand, we need to be careful not to be enamored by morbid curiosity of the supernatural. Both extremes can be used by the devil to keep us away from the simplicity in the gospel and the authority of God's kingdom.

Just as it was in the days when Jesus sent out his disciples to preach the kingdom of God we also are being sent out. We carry the message of good news that God has reconciled the world to himself through the Lord Jesus Christ. Along with the preaching of the gospel we

need to expect kingdom authority to drive out devils, heal the sick, and set at liberty those held prisoner by the enemy.

I know these things to be true in my personal experience. When I came to faith in the Lord Jesus I was delivered from many evil spirits. I have also experienced in my life the divine healing of the Lord Jesus in my physical body. I have liberty and freedom by believing the good news of the Lord Jesus.

I know from my own experience God's word is true. We can walk today in kingdom authority. We can and should stand completely on the sacred ground of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

We no longer live according to the flesh or to the old man. We enter into Jehovah. We are in the secret place of the most high, and abiding in the shadow of the almighty. The Lord is our provision, protection, and prize.

The Lord Jesus is hidden manna, for he is all of these things. He is the King and the Kingdom belongs to the Lord. Amen!

In God's kingdom the Lord himself is our provision. A shadow of this is seen in the Levites receiving their provision through the offerings and the tithe from Israel. This provision is also seen in the New Testament principle that those who labor in the gospel receive their living from the gospel. (**1 Corinthians 9:14**)

When the children of Israel entered their journey God provided for their need by sending them manna to eat. The purpose of this provision is outlined in **Deuteronomy 8:3**, "**And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.**"

Provision is often a tool in God's hands to humble his people, and to teach them to walk by faith and not by sight. Also, another purpose of God's provision which humbles us is to teach us not to be entangled with the world system. God teaches us to live simple, frugal lives so we can be free to follow him and obey his word and be a witness to this idol worshiping and money grubbing world.

There is a very definite and purposeful plan in God's mind when his people are humbled through scarcity.

In **Matthew 6:33** Jesus teaches us how God meets our physical needs. "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all of these other things will be added unto you as well.**"

This is an ironclad promise from the Lord Jesus. This promise is true and is not a lie. If we seek God he will take care of our needs.

However, in that process of provision, be prepared to be humbled and at times we may have to tighten our belt. The Lord knows those who are his. When he has tried us we will come forth as gold.

The test of provision is essential for an overcoming Christian life. Unless we get through this test we won't get any further in our journey. Let us cast all of our cares upon him because he cares for us.

Another bible verse I have learned to meditate on, stand on, pray and believe is **Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."**

There is no lack of resources in God's kingdom. The Lord owns everything and He is able to distribute resources according to his plan and purpose. If I walk through a time of scarcity I must remember God causes me to hunger that he may humble me and teach me that I do not live by bread only but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

I do not think it is a coincidence that the first temptation recorded in the Bible is related to something to eat. Also, the very first temptation recorded that Jesus overcame had to do with turning stones into bread to satisfy his hunger.

I believe this is one of the main obstacles which stops men from going all the way with God and fulfilling the calling of God upon one's life. Men are afraid they will have to do without. It's true we have to do without some things, but those things which we do without are probably only hindering us in serving God anyway. I think men would be amazed how much we can do without and still serve God to the fullest.

The Lord humbled those Hebrews and caused them to hunger, and he fed them with manna. Manna is not what they would have chosen as their provision. They would rather eat onions and flesh pots they had in Egypt. But God gave them manna. They said, "What is it?"

When Jesus fed the multitude they followed him around. **John 6:26, "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."**

Jesus knew this crowd was working hard to follow him but they did so because Jesus passed out free food. Jesus was a free lunch to these people. Many people follow Jesus because ministry is their career, their paycheck. God help us to examine our hearts.

John 6:27, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

The question I'm asking is why do I work? Most men's answer to this question is they work to earn money. They work so there is money to buy groceries and pay bills. But Jesus proved he can make bread out of thin air.

The point is: what are we living for? Are we living for Jesus? Or do we live for our own self? Are we focused on Christ or ourselves?

It is possible to perform any labor and do it for Jesus and to further the kingdom of God. We can pick up trash and if our heart is fixed on Jesus this work can be service and ministry for the Lord Jesus.

To labor for food which perishes is to spend life looking out only for our own interests. Our work is for our own mouth, or our own entertainment. Oh, we surely need for God to open our eyes to see why we are working! This is a fundamental issue to get straight in our lives before the Lord.

If a brother is called to labor in prayer and in the ministry of the word don't be afraid to leave a secular job. God will take care of us. We may have to do with a lot less but God will take care of us. Don't we want to see what God can do in our life if we completely abandon ourselves to him? Great faith produces great abandonment.

When Jesus told them not to work for the food which perishes they asked him a question: **What do we do then? John 6:28, "They said unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"**

If we are not reading carefully we might skip right over the Lord's reply to this question, but his reply is of vital importance to the Christian whether one is working in the world system or working in the ministry of the word.

John 6:29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Jesus' response to their question of what they should do was instead who they should be. They should believe. They should seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Unbelievers are consumed with food, clothing, houses, cars, and entertainment.

A believer should be the exact opposite. A believer should be consumed with Christ. The Lord will take care of our needs.

While we are on the subject of provision the topic naturally arises in my mind: contentment. At some point, we need to learn to be content.

1 Timothy 6:6-8, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

At what level of material goods are we going to learn contentment? People in America have way more than just food and clothing. We have TVs, cellphones, iPods, iPads, computers, entertainment centers, a refrigerator full of food, a closet full of clothes. Still yet with all this people are not content.

I believe contentment is learned and it is cultivated. We are not born with contentment. Instead, we are born covetous, rapacious, grasping, greedy, and always looking to fill our stomach and our minds. We are born with an insatiable desire to experience all the pleasure that we can attain.

But none of these things brings peace or contentment. It only brings addiction, heart ache, sorrow, broken lives, and broken families.

As a Christian we need to learn to be content with provision the Lord gives us. **Philippians 4:12-13, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."**

Paul learned he could be content in whatever state he was in. "...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (**Philippians 4:11**) He did not seek to be poor or to be rich. He accepted whatever provision the Lord gave, or whatever was withheld and not given to him. No matter what his provision level Paul's heart was set on one goal: Christ Jesus. In Christ he found his heart's desire, and a place of rest no matter what the world threw at him.

From the perspective of heaven the rich and poor are the same. The rich are not any better in quality than the poor, and the poor are not inferior to the rich in quality. They are men he has created. **Proverbs 22:2, "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all."**

The idea a man with money is of more value or worth comes from Satan. Satan fills the heart of the rich man with pride and vainglory. But the poor can be filled with envy and hatred. It would seem at first glance it does not matter if a person is rich or poor, because we are all sinners before God.

However, there is a difference the Lord mentions. Jesus makes it clear how difficult it is for the rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. This was shocking to the disciples, because their culture taught them the rich man was the righteous man. In that day men equated wealth with God's blessing.

Of course once again today we have this taught widely within the church and it inspires much idolatry and covetousness in the hearts of believers. No doubt these ideas came from the example of Abraham and Job who were blessed with material wealth. Just because some men in the Bible were rich does not therefore set up a precedent that all God's people who have enough faith should be rich. It was taught that God's blessing upon someone means the person must be rich and wealthy.

Jesus turned this teaching upside down and said the gospel was preached to the poor. The money grubbing religious people who lived during Jesus' day mocked him and would not hear him. The same is true today.

Jesus rebuked these rich religious people and overturned the tables of the money changers in the temple. When Jesus attacked the money changers in the temple we see one of the few glimpses of the holy righteous anger of the prophet from Nazareth. The other times we see this kind of scalding rebuke was towards the religious leaders of his day.

Have things changed at all? We still have this teaching of wealth and faith leavening the church. The Pharisees and covetous and idolaters are still with us today, still proclaiming their message that God's blessing is demonstrated through wealth.

The problem with this is that wicked people are also wealthy, and many holy prophets of the Lord are dirt poor. Just as in the fact we cannot determine a person's standing with God by their suffering or lack of suffering (see the book of Job), we also cannot determine a person's standing with God by their poverty or wealth.

But, we do know this, from the Lord Jesus himself: it is much more likely that a rich person is wicked and unbelieving. These rich church folk who spew heresy are certainly helping bring in the last days great falling away of the church.

If Jesus said "Woe" upon the religious leaders in his day, I wonder what he is saying to the religious leaders in our day and time?

James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, expounded on this in **James 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"**

I live in a generation that is hoodwinked and deceived by wolves in sheep's clothing who preach health, wealth, prosperity, positive confession, and a positive mental attitude. These deceivers are not preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ but they are preaching spiritual law. The curse of God's law is upon them. These deceivers have injected the church with covetousness, strife, envy, idolatry and vainglory. The Lord will judge them according to their works.

Brothers and sisters, are you content with what you have? Are you using what you have to glorify Jesus and build the Kingdom of God? Even the poorest Christian in America has enormous resources to preach the gospel.

Before I leave this subject of the rich and the poor I want to remind us of one thing. All of this money is temporary. Remember the man who built barns to store all his goods and then his soul was required of him. (**Luke 12:16-21**) The book of James again reminds us of God's judgment on the rich.

James 5:1-3, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."

In **Revelation 3:14-18** Jesus rebukes the church of Laodicea. Here is a description of this church. **Verse 17, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"**

To me it sounds like Jesus is describing the modern day megachurches in America who are constantly spouting their positive confessions that they are rich. I pray that Christians in America will hear the words of Jesus.

Verse 18-19, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

29. Distortion Of The King

As mentioned previously the machinery of the world system consists of government, business, and society. These three parallel and relate to the description the apostle John gives us in **1 John 2** of the spiritual manifestation of the world system which are: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. All of these three can be seen in Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3**).

We've discussed before the distortion of the prophet is government, the distortion of the priest is business, and now we come to the distortion of the king, which is society.

In the world system, society is the distortion of the king. Society consists of: (1) civic and religious leaders, (2) business leaders, (3) citizens (community).

When I think of society I think in terms of individuals and not a whole enclosed system like government or business.

Citizens continuously desire to usurp government. Society and government are always at odds with each other. Government tries to bring citizens under authority, and citizens look for ways to subvert government and establish themselves as kings. This can easily be seen when citizens organize protests around ideas such as justice and equality. This is a pretext for rebellion against authority. The real motive is overthrow of the government and establishment of the individual as king.

Also, within society there are subgroups which infiltrate government. There are clubs and civic groups with powerful people and politicians who secretly try to subvert government and steer society according to their own nefarious purposes.

The Christian who works in society will be tempted primarily with a desire for prestige and position, which is the pride of life.

A job in society would include pastors, priests, or anyone in community service, which would include jobs such as lawyers, doctors, nurses, directors of non-profit organizations.

Every individual citizen exalts their own interests. They strive to make a name for themselves and to lift themselves up above all those around them. This is the normal attitude of society, and is the opposite in purpose and nature of God's kingdom and God's King.

30. Kingdom Age

Romans 8:22, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

When Adam and Eve fell into sin in the Garden of Eden it did not only affect them but also had an impact upon creation itself. Many times in scripture we can see references made to the land needing rest and also the blood from murdered people crying out from the soil. Mankind and the planet earth are tied together. The reason for this is because it was God's purpose for man to have authority over the earth and maintain it.

We see in our modern society that even unbelievers have a concept of stewardship over the earth and over the environment. The reason these ideas take root and grow in society is because there is a basis for these ideas in truth. Of course, men try to address this issue in their own rebellious sinful ways.

To truly be a good steward over the environment and the earth we must repent of our sins and put our faith in the Lord Jesus. If someone really cares about environmentalism and preserving nature they should preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Jesus is the surest way to bring about real change in the planet by first addressing the root of the problem: sin! Sin is the real enemy of the planet, and must be addressed through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I don't condemn Christians involved with environmentalism, but I grieve they do not focus their energy on the real solution for this planet and that is preaching the gospel. If we want to save this planet we must save ourselves by turning to God in repentance and putting our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I speak of the earth my purpose for doing so is to make a point: there is a day of rest for this earth. There is a renewal, a restoration, and a recovery for this planet. We will soon be entering into the seventh day (from the viewpoint of man), and also the third day of God (from the viewpoint of eternity). This is the Lord's day. This is the kingdom age.

Revelation 20:2-4, 6-7, "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived

and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

A thousand years is a millennium.

2 Peter 3:8, "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

A thousand years is one day. A day is a thousand years. I believe this is specifically referring to the kingdom age of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Arriving soon we will see the Lord's Day, a thousand years, in which Christ Jesus will reign on this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This thousand years is a rest for the earth, and it is also a time for God's people to come into their inheritance. At this time we will see the full expression of Israel and the church. In that day we will see that we are God's people and we are one.

All of the promises made to Israel will be fulfilled during this thousand year reign of Christ. The church will reign with Christ as the bride. The nations will all serve Jesus as their King and Lord. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (**Philippians 2:9-11**)

Earlier I spoke of kingdom authority in the sense of what we see in the Gospels and the book of Acts with casting out devils, preaching the gospel, and healing the sick. Now I will speak of kingdom authority in the sense of order and administration.

Matthew 20:25-28, "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (See also Mark 10:42-25)

Matthew 23:8-11, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

The Lord Jesus desires people to volunteer of their own free will, out of love and appreciation for Him, to serve others in love and reverence.

This is the only acceptable way to serve the Lord. Systems which force men into subjection out of fear of discipline are grievous. These worldly authority systems in ministries and

churches do not spread spiritual life but death, in the same way the world system suppresses spiritual life.

Spiritual life comes from a heart inspired by love. Worldly systems come from a top down hierarchy that lords its power and authority over people.

When we truly love we move in humility and reverence and others are inspired to follow Christ out of love and humility.

Any other force used in ministry results in disciples learning a wrong motive. If they are forced, if they are manipulated to obey, then they will base their Christian life on these principles of fear and intimidation and will fail to follow Christ once they are no longer within this system. They will always need someone to hold their hand, and if they have no one to hold them accountable they will be unable to walk in the Spirit.

A man who loves the Lord does not need someone to hold his hand once he understands God's grace and power.

He may need help to get started to learn how to study the word, how to pray, how to give his testimony, but after this he must be encouraged to love Jesus and not to look to man for any help or assistance. Men who bring young Christians into bondage by lording it over them are doing a serious disservice to that individual and also to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

The path to consistent victory is faith and love. The path to living an overcoming Christian life is faith and love. We must teach young ones to love Jesus and put no confidence in man. This means we can take no ownership over their faith and their service. We must encourage them to leave us and go out into the world to find their own way. This means the very best of our disciples must be quickly taught to leave us and find their own way in service to the Lord Jesus.

When we love and serve in humility others will see this and will be inspired to follow Christ out of love, faith, and humility. If this is not in us we will present a false representation of the Lord Jesus and cause others to stumble. We are examples, not lords! Oh, may those who lead us truly understand how important it is that they fall on their faces before the Lord Jesus and be changed into broken men who live in love, faith, and humility.

This is the difference between worldly authority and the spiritual authority of Jesus. We are volunteers out of love and respect.

When a brother is placed in a position of leadership and uses this with the attitude of Gentile, worldly authority he will bring much suffering to those under him. The world system of authority is systematized in a hierarchy and each individual is given titles. A system of hierarchy is the system of the world. It is mathematical, divisive, based on numbers and destroys mans' spirit.

It is the love of Christ that compels us. It is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ that keeps us each and every day. It is not men standing over us, overbearing and ready to discipline.

Spiritual authority is influence, not manipulation. Spiritual authority is love, not fear. Spiritual authority is soft spoken and gentle. It is a winsome pulling of the Holy Spirit. It does not violate man's free will but leaves plenty of room for men to make mistakes and fail. Spiritual authority is able to discern, but it does not judge. It is ready to take a person's hand when a hand is stretched out for help, but will not grab a person's hand who does not extend it.

I pray for those who are reaching young people that they will labor in this love, in this faith, in this humility of spiritual authority. My heart longs to reach these and give them the understanding of the love of Jesus. My heart aches for the vulnerable new Christians who are under their care. I weep many tears thinking of these young Christians who are so vulnerable and who desire to follow Jesus.

God is looking for a new breed of ministry and church which move in God's kingdom authority and do not look to men for provision or protection.

Where are the ministries who are not afraid of being sued, the ministries who do not go to such extreme lengths to protect themselves against their enemy, but instead simply trust unless the Lord builds the house the laborers labor in vain. If the Lord builds the house, we can trust the Lord will protect the house. If we fear the Lord we do not need to fear what men shall do unto us.

When Christians use worldly authority in ministry it spreads spiritual death. Men no longer serve out of love but out of their own financial or survival needs. Prestige and reputation become paramount. Humility is forced and only provides a facade of religiosity that even the youngest Christian can see through.

What is ministry like that moves in kingdom authority? Read the biographies of George Muller, Jim Elliot, Richard Wurmbrand, Corrie ten Boom, Amy Carmichael, Brother Andrew, CT. Studd, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone. These people served in love and humility and their lives were changed by the gospel message they preached. Read the testimony of Watchman Nee in China. Read about missionaries who went to the mission field and never came back. Amy Carmichael looked on missions as a chance to die for the Lord Jesus and for the sake of the gospel.

Men who enter ministry as a career or to make a living, or God forbid, to make a name for themselves, have truly missed the calling of God.

We are called to lose our lives for the sake of Christ.

A man who is moving in kingdom authority has a genuine fear of God. He is afraid to do anything which will grieve the Holy Spirit. He realizes all he has in this life is God's presence. He is like Moses, who refused to go forward unless the presence of God went with him. These men do not make a name for themselves. Jesus is their provision, protection, and prize.

The Kingdom of God on the third day, the Lord's Day, will absolutely not be run in the same way the Gentile world authority is run.

On that day, men will truly fear the Lord God. They will love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength; they will love their neighbor as themselves.

During the third day there will be those who reign and rule with Christ over the kingdoms and over the nations of the world.

Revelation 2:26-27, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

Revelation 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Overcomers will be participants in executing the authority of God's Kingdom on earth.

What will this be like? From the description of an iron rod and broken vessels one might think this will be a dictatorship of force.

Remember the authority of the kingdom is totally opposite from what we have today. Our present world system revolves around provision (money) and position.

On that day everything will revolve around King Jesus.

Every citizen in that kingdom will want to obey the King. And what will this King tell them? He has already told us. We will love one another. The government administration on that day will cause men to love their neighbor. Everyone will work together for the common good. The entire world will be filled with the knowledge of God. (**Habakkuk 2:14**). People will live according to the law of God in every way, and their eyes will be opened to see the wisdom and beauty of God's order, God's law, and God's government.

Everyone will desire to do right because every heart will be inspired by the example of the King. We will serve one another even as he has served us. We will live for one another even as he lived for us and died for us.

It will be quite a time, when a man who lives to be a hundred years old will be considered a child! (**Isaiah 65:20-25**)

Eventually the question arises in my mind: why has the Lord done all of this? I know God has everything within himself he could ever need. Why create men? Why create a universe, and the earth? I do not believe God created us because he needs us or because in eternity he was lonely and needed a friend.

I believe God is love and the Father has always enjoyed fellowship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son and the Holy Spirit have always enjoyed fellowship with the Father and with one another.

Why did God make us? Not because he needed to but because he chose to do it. We are created to fellowship and commune with God. We are called children, brothers, sons, and heirs. All of these are pictures of fellowship and communion.

The Lord loves and so we are made to love him. He does not need, but he has chosen to love, to fellowship, and to commune with us.

God is love. We are made in the image of God, to love him, fellowship, and commune.

Spending our lives in communion with the Lord is what we have been made for and created for. The Lord created us, he redeemed us, bought us back, and has made us his own. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

God is three in one. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the prophet, priest, and king. He is Israel, church, and the kingdom. Amen.

31. The Household Of Faith

The only difference between the Hebrews and the Egyptians on the night of the first passover was the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts of the homes of the Hebrews.

It will serve us well to remember what makes the difference for us today is the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb represents all of what the Lord Jesus accomplished. He purchased us in his own blood, and in this transaction obtained for us forgiveness of sins, deliverance from self, sin, the world, and the devil. He saved us from death and hell. There are a multitude of other things one can list which Christ did at Calvary.

He said, "**It is finished.**" (John 19:30)

Many believe Jesus forgives their sins but for one reason or another do not move beyond this to take hold upon all God's grace provides through the finished work of Christ.

Only God knows if a person is an overcomer. Just as in the days of Elijah when God set aside 7,000 men who followed Jehovah and did not bow the knee to Baal, so the Lord also has a remnant today. When the Lord Jesus returns there will be a remnant who remain and who are looking for the blessed hope of the return of the Lord Jesus.

In the household of faith there are brothers of the flesh, and there are brothers of the Spirit.

The first example in the Bible where we see this principle is in the history of Cain and Abel. God did not accept Cain's offering because it was not given according to faith. Cain did not have the eyes of faith to see God's order.

No doubt Adam explained to them that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. God did not accept Cain's offering. However, Abel did offer an acceptable sacrifice to God, proving he was a righteous man. Abel had eyes to see God's order and government.

Out of anger and malice towards God Cain murdered Abel. Probably he killed Abel the same way he saw lambs being offered. This was his way of slapping God in the face with this business of a blood sacrifice. He offered God his brother's blood. That blood cried out to God from the earth for vengeance.

In this example, we see the difference between those who are of the flesh and those who are of the Spirit. These two brothers were of one household, the house of Adam and Eve.

In the case of Cain and Abel the motive for murder could only have been God's preference and affirmation of Abel against Cain. This is all it takes for some people to carry out murder. All that is needed is envy, and a person can be filled with murder. Cain no doubt thought he should receive special treatment or preference because he was the first born. However, just to make a point, it seems the Lord on multiple occasions in the Bible did not choose the first born in families. He would choose the least likely in a family, men such as David, Gideon, Jacob, and Isaac. The Lord does not think like we do. His ways are higher than ours. (**Isaiah 55:8**).

32. Abraham And Lot

In the history of Abraham and Lot their distinction is not obvious at first. They both were of the house of Terah. Here we see again the Lord presents us with the account of two men who were of one house, and yet as we read their history we see one is of the flesh and the other is of the Spirit.

As it usually is in life, the division between Lot and Abraham came as a result of strife over possessions. Abraham did not strive with Lot directly, but the servants in his household did strive with those in Lot's household.

As a result Abraham proposed they go different ways in order to keep the peace between them.

Abraham was a gracious man and let Lot choose whatever he thought was the best of the green pastures. As a result, Lot chose what he thought was best for himself and pitched his tent towards Sodom. There are many lessons we could learn from observing Lot's choice and the consequences which followed.

However, I want to press on to list the differences between Lot and Abraham. This is my purpose: to see the difference between the brother of the flesh and the brother of the Spirit.

The main difference between these brothers was that Abraham received his instructions directly from the Lord himself.

Lot must have known this because he followed Abraham all the way to Canaan. There is no indication Lot ever heard from God or received a word from the Lord.

However, he was happy enough to go along with Abraham and to enjoy the Lord's blessings which were upon Abraham. No doubt the Lord blessed Lot for the sake of Abraham. It was these very material blessings which caused Lot to separate from Abraham.

This principle holds true in nations as well. Many times God blesses a nation because of the remnant of believers in that country.

However, as time goes on, the unbeliever whose material blessings give him the time to corrupt himself, slowly but surely separates himself from the remnant in principle, word, action, and attitude. They pitch their tent toward Sodom. I would say America is even beyond this point, and is now surrounded by Sodom.

We are at a point in America where God is sending his prophets to intercede and warn Americans of God's judgment which is appearing. This judgment is already happening in America. It is like moths eating away in secret without anyone noticing until the garment is so hole ridden it can no longer be worn.

We see in scripture there is a concentration of God's prophets during the decline of Israel during the destruction of the nation and the exile to Assyria and Babylon.

Another difference between Lot and Abraham is where they end up. Lot ends up in the congregation of the dead. (**Proverbs 21:16**). Abraham kept moving through the land as a stranger and as a pilgrim. He did not make a house or a name for himself, but lived in tents and kept his focus on the Lord.

In order for Lot to become a citizen of Sodom he must have made agreements with that world system. Lot was driven by the desire for provision and so naturally sought position and prestige in that community. The sodomites accused Lot of desiring to be a judge over them. This was probably a true accusation.

The third difference I see in these brothers is in the end Lot was a prey to the enemy. He was carried away captive in time of war and rescued by Abraham. Lot was a prisoner of war, and Abraham came to his rescue. He might have died in Sodom when fire fell from heaven if Abraham had not interceded and prayed for his deliverance from God's wrath.

What was the legacy of Lot? Two daughters who committed incest with him and initiated evil nations who later opposed and fought against Israel.

As days turn into weeks and months and then years the separation only becomes wider and deeper. **Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"**

33. Ishmael And Isaac

Ishmael and Isaac are a clear example of this contrast of two in one house: one brother of the flesh, one brother of the Spirit.

Paul in the book of Galatians makes a distinction between Ishmael and Isaac. He uses Isaac as the example of God's promise inherited by faith. This is the brother of the Spirit. Ishmael is associated with the shadow of the law, Hagar, and bondage. After Christ was risen, the Jewish religious ordinances were done away. All of these were a shadow pointing to Christ. Now we have Christ and we no longer need these Jewish religious ordinances. Paul associates Ishmael and Hagar with religion which brings people into slavery and into bondage.

Ishmael came from Abraham and Sarah's impatience. This child born from the bond woman Hagar was a child born out of unbelief inspired by the impatience of Sarah and Abraham. They both suffered because of their lack of patience, not to mention all of the hardship and suffering they caused to Hagar and Ishmael.

The Lord took care of Hagar and Ishmael even after he told Abraham to send them away. Why did God do this? Why didn't he just let them die in the desert? Because Ishmael was still Abraham's son. God not only saved Ishmael but blessed him and multiplied him into nations. However, Ishmael did not receive God's promise and was not a man of the Spirit.

Remember God will bless materially and physically these brothers of the flesh, even though they do not walk in faith and do not inherit the kingdom of God. One difference we can see in Hagar and Ishmael is that they despised those over them and were mockers. When Hagar became pregnant she despised Sarah. She thought she was better than her mistress. This is the attitude of the flesh. This is pride and arrogance which exalts self despite the reality of her actual position in that family. We also see Ishmael mocked Isaac during a festival held when Isaac was weaned. Sarah saw this mocking from Ishmael and it motivated her to persuade Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

Psalm 1:1, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

34. Esau And Jacob

Jacob and Esau were the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Once again we can see in this example the contrast between two brothers in one house. One brother is of the flesh and the other one is of the Spirit.

Sooner or later there will come a time when there will be one last house with a brother of the flesh and a brother of the Spirit.

Luke 17:36, "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This also parallels the parable of the ten virgins in **Matthew chapter 25**.

What were the characteristics which separated Esau and Jacob?

I think it is significant such attention to detail is preserved in the accounts describing the physical appearances and disposition of the personalities of these brothers. The whole point here is to underline and draw attention to their differences.

One difference is the impatience of Esau and his focus on his immediate needs and desires. This is demonstrated in the account when Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Esau despised his birthright. His birthright included the privilege of being born the eldest. He was the first born in Isaac's house. According to the order of a natural man he was first, but Jacob maneuvered his brother into a position which exposed Esau's selfishness. A selfish man disqualifies himself from being a leader.

Another clear sign Esau was of the flesh was he consoled himself with the thought of murdering his brother. Scripture makes it clear Esau had murder in his heart. This is the reason Rebekah persuaded Isaac to send Jacob away so Esau would not kill Jacob.

A third sign Esau was of the flesh and not of the Spirit was his marriage to pagan women in Canaan. He showed he was not a man of faith because he was drawn to unbelieving pagan women and yoked himself together with these women.

Making agreements with unbelievers, hatred, murder, and selfishness were chief characteristics in Esau. It is obvious God's hand was not on this man.

In what way did Jacob show he was the brother of the Spirit? First and foremost, because God spoke to him. Jacob heard God's voice. He that is of God hears God's words. He had visions and revelations from God.

When Jacob served Laban for Rachel and Leah he showed he was not a selfish man. He was willing to submit to others and to sacrifice for many years.

The third way we see Jacob was the brother of the Spirit is that he was transformed. He did not stay Jacob, but was changed by God into Israel.

Also, we see at the end of Israel's life he had true spiritual vision in his blessings upon Ephraim, Manasseh, and upon the sons of Israel.

35. Moses And The Burning Bush

My goal in looking at biblical history is to see how God sets apart a remnant. In Moses we see God's selection of one man, in a similar way to when he called out Abraham.

In the account of the bush the Lord appears as a bush on fire but is not consumed. Moses turned aside to see this unusual sight, and when God saw Moses turn aside he called to him out of the bush: "**Moses, Moses**". (**Exodus 3:4**)

The purpose in God appearing to Moses was not for the sake of Moses alone, but because the Lord had a larger goal in mind. This goal was to bring his people out of Egypt. To make sure Israel would be ready to leave the Lord allowed them to suffer under Pharaoh in Egypt.

There are many lessons here but we only want to take note when God called Moses he spoke his name. After he called Moses by name he then revealed his name to Moses: "**I Am That I Am**". (**Exodus 3:14**)

Those in the remnant called out of the world and out of dead religion are those who have fellowship with the living God. They hear God's voice and move in the fear of God to obey his voice and his words.

One characteristic of the remnant, therefore, is an unusual sense of the present reality of the person of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice and follow him. They do not follow the voice of strangers. (**John 10:27**)

When you see someone who claims to be a Christian following the voice of the stranger you should be careful with this person. Be careful not to make agreements with someone who obviously does not have discernment to know the difference between the shepherd and a hireling. (**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**).

"Go from the presence of a foolish man when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." (**Proverbs 14:7**)

Another characteristic Moses displayed in this account is humility. The forty years on the backside of the desert changed this once proud prince of Egypt. He now asks God, "Who am I?" (**Exodus 3:11**)

We can ask this, but is it important we get an answer? God is sovereign. The Lord tells Moses he will be with him. It is enough. This is all we need to know. The Lord will be with us. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (**Hebrews 13:8**)

36. A Table In The Wilderness

We see in the account of Moses and the burning bush the characteristics of a remnant overcomer.

Israel in the wilderness is an example of a brother in the flesh. Israel demonstrated this flesh nature through unbelief and challenged God in regard to provision.

A result of unbelief was an entire generation of Israel came out of Egypt and died in the wilderness. They all died in the wilderness except for Joshua and Caleb and the children born after God pronounced judgment.

Of the twelve spies who surveyed the promised land only Joshua and Caleb had spiritual eyes of faith. All the others saw with eyes of unbelief.

Along with unbelief the brother of the flesh has his mind on provision. His mind is set on earthly things. He is like Esau who sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. Jesus said Gentiles are always thinking about what they will eat, what they will wear. Their mind is completely set on provision, whether this is food or clothing or shelter. (**Matthew 6:31-33**)

Let me say clearly: the overcomer is not materialistic. The overcomer experienced the death of the cross and is delivered from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. I don't mean he is above temptation. The goal of the overcomer is not things! The overcomer desires the presence of the Lord Jesus above all things.

These men prove themselves to be of the flesh when they murmur against God and challenge God to spread a table for them in the wilderness. (**Psalm 78:19**)

How much different is the man of faith in **Psalm 23** who proclaims, "you spread a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Let us be men of faith and proclaim with David that God is our provider. The Lord is our provision, he is our protector, and he is our prize. We have everything we need in the Lord Jesus Christ.

37. Saul and David

Now I want to leap forward in the history of Israel and consider another contrast between a brother in the flesh and a brother in the Spirit. Remember, the purpose in these comparisons is to prove there is a principle of a pair in one house. These pairs represent a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.

Saul was demanded by the people of Israel. In a parallel manner, the Antichrist will rise to power at the demand of the world. As the prophet Samuel anointed Saul at God's command, so in the last days a false prophet will accompany the man of sin at the will of Satan.

In many ways Saul parallels the Antichrist. He foreshadows this dark king who will rise out of the nations.

One of the saddest things, I think, Saul ever did was when he murdered the priests of the Lord. Saul went from being disobedient to Samuel's command, to becoming a murderous butcher. I can see how the seed of these murders was always there in Saul, hating, growing, evolving. People do not become maniacs overnight. They evolve into the evil despots we see on the news.

Saul proved he was of the flesh through impatience, through insincerity, through disobedience, through rebellion. Samuel told him, Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. (**1 Samuel 15:3**) This we can see clearly manifested in the end of Saul's life. The night before he died he was consulting a witch. (**1 Samuel 28:7**)

The main principle operating in Saul which made him a man of the flesh was rebellion. It was not unbelief or selfishness. Saul was rebellious and stubborn. These characteristics drove him to make an agreement with a witch before he died.

Not only was Saul rebellious but he was murderous. He tried many times to kill David and he murdered the priests of the Lord.

Saul's sins were so bad there was a drought and famine during the reign of King David stemming from the sins of Saul. David cleaned up Saul's mess by allowing the Gibeonites to execute seven of Saul's descendants.

What were some of David's characteristics which made him a brother of the Spirit?

Primarily this: when he was anointed by Samuel the Holy Spirit came upon David from that day forward.

Some could even argue some of David's sins were as bad or worse than Saul. David took a man's wife and then had him killed purposely while in battle.

David was punished by God for these crimes, and yet there is a different heart and attitude with King David.

One thing which set David apart was he learned obedience through the things he suffered. **Psalm 119:71, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."**

David showed humility and restraint towards his enemies. When he was being cursed by Shimei David did not retaliate but he committed judgment into the hands of the Lord. (**2 Samuel 16:5-13**)

Also, we see a clear difference in the way David maintained the throne. When his son rose up against him to take the throne David stepped aside and allowed God to deliver him and restore him to the throne. (**2 Samuel 15:13-17**)

Another trait I see in David is when he failed God he humbled himself, confessed his sin, and repented of his sins. Psalm 51 is a good example of a prayer of repentance which David wrote.

38. Watch And Be Sober

I think we can see from these examples there is a pattern in the bible of contrasting a pair, with one of the pair representing the flesh and the other one representing the Spirit.

The point of these examples is in every house of God there is a remnant of true believers who walk in the Spirit and are righteous by faith in God. These brothers believe God and it is accounted to them as righteousness. These men are not always perfect, but they know God,

they fear God, and they love God. Ultimately they show who they are by their actions of faith, courage, humility, and love.

In these last days we also have a remnant of Christians who believe in the Lord and hear the voice of the Lord. These brothers move in the Spirit of the Lord; they receive revelation from the Lord; they are obedient to the heavenly vision.

In the garden of Gethsemane the Lord said to the disciples to watch and to pray. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.

Paul said in **1 Thessalonians 5:6**, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober"

There is a wave of spiritual sleepiness and apathy in the church today. There will only be a small minority who hear this message and wake up.

Not every person calling himself a Christian is caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, but some are left behind to endure the tribulation. "Two will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left." These two in the field represent the brother of the flesh and the brother of the Spirit. The brother of the Spirit will be taken up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The brother in the flesh is left behind to make a choice of whether they will be an overcomer during the tribulation or take the mark of the beast. Either way means death. One is physical death, the other is physical and spiritual death. The Lord makes a special promise to overcomers in the tribulation that they will not be hurt by the second death. (**Revelation 2:11**)

Paul tells Timothy in a great house there are common vessels and there are vessels of honour. There are two brothers today in God's house. (**2 Timothy 2:20-21**).

There is the brother feeding his flesh and is spiritually apathetic. The other brother is walking in the Spirit, hearing God's voice, and getting ready for the return of the Lord.

39. The Ten Virgins

In **Matthew 25** Jesus gives us the parable of the ten virgins. In the context of the preceding chapter and also this chapter we have in view the context of the last days, the end times, and the day of the Lord.

As we have discussed already, there is a biblical precedent and a principle throughout scripture of a pair that contrasts a brother of the flesh with a brother of the Spirit. These brothers both are in the household of faith.

This brings us to the parable of the ten virgins. This is describing a household, which is labeled "virgins". The household is divided into two parts: the wise and the foolish. The only discrepancy between them which we can see besides one called foolish and the other called wise is what they brought with them while waiting for the return of their master. Also, the very

fact this parable is in the context of the return of a master clearly shows this pertains to the day of the Lord and the return of the Lord Jesus.

We don't want to ponder on what one group possessed versus what the other group possessed. However, for my purpose, I only want to demonstrate again we have a pair, in this example a pair of five foolish and five wise virgins. Only one group went with the master when he returned. This is a dire warning to the church we live in today.

As we can see throughout all of scripture the real difference in these groups is that one is of the flesh and one is of the Spirit.

When they were awakened from sleep one group went with the master into a time of celebration but the foolish virgins were shut out.

As modern believers do we tend to look at faith from the viewpoint of people who are unsaved or Christian?

It seems to me the real message seen throughout the Bible is the difference between religious people and true believers. Jesus spent much time ministering to the unsaved masses, but the part of the gospels I think that really applies to us today is the interactions Jesus had with the religious people.

Most of what people think of as the church, the outward structure, organization, and buildings belong more to the world system than it does to the bride of Christ. They are Christian in name only. They are the foolish virgins with lamps which will extinguish and go out before the Master returns.

40. Church Asleep

In Genesis we read the account of how God put Adam into a deep sleep before bringing forth his bride Eve out of his side.

In a similar manner, the body of Christ is asleep in the last days so God can bring out a bride for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church sleeps! This sleeping started the same night Jesus was betrayed in the garden. Jesus kept asking them to wake up and pray. He told them the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

In the last days there is also a deep sleep upon the church. Paul described it as a great falling away, a great apostasy. Many people who thought they were Christians will be deceived and put to sleep by a host of seducing evil spirits. In these last days there is more religious delusion and deception than ever before in history. A lot of it is propagated over the internet.

This is a kind of supernatural sleepiness. However, despite this, there are those who watch and pray and are not asleep. They are watching, praying, and it is these who are hearing

God's voice. These are those who will hear the shout from heaven, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.

We are exhorted repeatedly by the Lord and the apostles not to sleep but to watch and to pray.

I think there is only a small minority who heed this call to watch and pray in this last hour. Most people are asleep in front of the TV, or they drink alcohol, or they are consumed with anxiety and worry over the cares of life.

Luke 21:34-36, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Ephesians 5:5, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

The remnant in these last days must get shut in with God. They need to clear their desk of all idols and all distractions. Get the Bible and start praying and asking God to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

I am not saying men in the household of faith left behind when Jesus calls us to meet him in the air are not Christians. I'm not saying people don't know about Jesus, but the problem is Jesus does not know who they are. (**Matthew 7:22-23**)

This is a difficult question to answer, because when we look at the lives of those who are of the flesh in the house of faith it seems like from history they just get worse and worse.

Cain got worse quickly. It is uncertain what Ishmael ended up like. Esau became worse, and his descendants became the enemies of Israel. We know Saul ended up committing suicide. What happened to the foolish virgins?

Matthew 25:12, "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

I do think it is possible some of those left behind wake up after the bride is taken, and they realize what happened, and then truly give their hearts and lives over to the Lord Jesus. Reading the book of Revelation clearly shows there are saints who endure through the time of the tribulation on earth.

If there was ever a message we need to hear in these last days before the return of Christ it is this message of becoming an overcomer, a member of the remnant, one who is a part of the bride of Christ called out of the sleeping church.

41. Few Are Chosen

Luke 21:36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

We should try to see and understand that the gospel goes out to everyone. The Lord invites everyone to believe in his name and receive eternal life.

What we see here, however, is specifically dealing with a time in history when we are exhorted to always pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape something that is coming upon the world. We should pray that we should be counted worthy.

I am not suggesting that after we begin by faith we now turn to self effort in order to make ourselves holier or more spiritual than other people. This is not the way! It cheapens what has already been accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus. Just as we received Christ Jesus we are to also walk in him. How did we receive the Lord? By faith. By faith alone did we believe in the Lord Jesus and received forgiveness of sins.

The problem is, people are ignorant that there is much more Christ has done for us!

Many are called. Many people walk up the aisle of some church and pray with some man to receive forgiveness of sins.

But what then? Do they continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? If they are relying on that preacher, it is doubtful they will ever make any further progress than knowing their sins are forgiven.

Why is this? Because next Sunday that preacher is still preaching the same message on the "A,B,C's" of getting saved.

A man will actually have to leave the church building and search high and low to hear a gospel which shows him or teaches him he can walk in victory over his own self, sin, the world, and the devil.

This is why many are called but few are chosen. Only a minority of people shut themselves in with God until they can hear God's voice speaking to them. They are not willing to do the hard work of believing everything the word of God says.

They are very comfortable with their bible doctrines and traditions of men which are handed down to them from one generation to the next.

But things are different now. Things are no longer the same in this present generation. We have people walking around on every side who are demon possessed and filled with murder. Children are killing each other in schools. We need to wake up to the day that we are living in, yet not to be afraid, but so we can draw near to God. The word of God promises if we draw near to him then he will draw near to us.

The main difference between the called and the chosen is this: the chosen hear God's voice. They can hear the voice of the Lord and are accountable directly to the Lord Jesus.

Do not let any man stand between you and Jesus. I am weak in this regard. I have many times followed a man with a strong personality who led me away from God's gift and calling on my life. Listen to the Lord. When God speaks to you it is possible you might get confirmation from a man but I believe the Lord prefers to deal with us directly.

Many people I respect advocate getting man's input into God's direction for our lives. I say if God really speaks to you then you do not need men's confirmation. A sign of weak faith is looking for approval from man.

I can tell you how you can be sure God is talking to you. His voice will absolutely change your life and not for the worse. You will fear God, and will live a holy pure life. You will overnight lose interest in things like entertainment that waste your time. You will be very earnest in seeking the Lord and will want to hear him speak to you again.

If you are still dabbling in compromise, then you have not heard from God lately and will need someone to hold your hand and be accountable to someone.

42. The Flesh Versus The Spirit

Paul outlines the symptoms of a man who walks in the flesh versus the man who walks according to the Spirit. I would like to take some time here to meditate on these verses and understand what these symptoms are.

Galatians 5:19-24, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

I was surprised at the definitions of some of these works of the flesh. Some are fairly self explanatory. One of these which was a surprise to me was "variance", and also "emulations".

According to Webster's dictionary the word "variance" here is similar to variable. This is someone who is always changing their mind. It can also be someone who knows their own mind but constantly makes other people guess who they are or what they believe. When I was looking at variance it also means someone who argues or debates. This person prides himself on his balanced mind and his ability to see every subject from a dozen different perspectives.

The only problem with this is the person's only real conviction is that they have no conviction. They pride themselves on the contradictions in their life and are amused by juxtaposition.

This is a person who is double-minded and unstable in all their ways. Even though they profess to be a Christian their best friends are unbelievers or other compromising Christians.

The other word which stood out to me is "emulations". The biblical definition of this is the old English definition, and not the modern word "emulation", which has a positive sense to it.

The old English sense of this word is competitiveness. It is an attitude of wanting to be equal or better than other people. We can see this attitude easily in the attitudes and words of the early disciples of Christ before the resurrection. They often would argue or quarrel among themselves as to who was the greatest among them.

This attitude gives ground for the enemy to set a person up for prestige, position, and pride.

The fruit of the Spirit which has always stood out to me as lacking in my life is gentleness. At one point I went through the Bible and studied every verse in the Bible on gentleness. I studied and meditated on it for a long time so I could become a gentle person. I'm still working on this.

Paul gives us a clear picture of the contrast between walking in the flesh and waking in the Spirit.

The path to freedom from the flesh lies in the cross. Paul says here those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its lusts and affections.

The way we must overcome the flesh is to walk in the Spirit.

The way to walk in the Spirit is to first enter into God's rest. We must sit down in the heavens with Christ. We need a full understanding of all Christ accomplished in his finished work.

Once we understand, then we stand in this by faith. We do not seek out systems, traditions, programs or steps. No, we simply learn to abide in the finished work of Christ.

As we remain in this, we become one with Christ. Each passing day we become more and more one with Jesus in spirit. Our spirits are united. We fellowship and commune with Christ. This relationship with Jesus changes us from the inside out.

Inevitably the flesh loses its power over us and we begin to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Our will must be broken so we become united with him in goal, purpose, and objective.

43. Fellowship with Christ

Paul wrote he wanted to know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection.

To have this fellowship with Christ requires agreement. We must start out agreeing with God that we are sinners and deserve the fire of hell. When we see this and agree with God then the next thing is we agree with God's method of salvation.

Many people can see there is a problem in their lives. They twist and turn to all kinds of suggested self help, but nothing ever seems to really work. The reason why systems do not work is because it relies upon the person with the problem to work at it. This is like telling a man with no arms to put on a tie, or like telling a man who cannot see to read a book. People cannot understand the futility of their systems because of their own pride and arrogance.

It is not enough to realize a problem exists. We also must be willing to submit to God's method of fixing the problem.

God's answer to this problem is always Christ himself. The Lord Jesus is a real person, and he is the answer to our problem. His work at Calvary made the way for us to be forgiven of sins, delivered from self, sin, the world, and the devil.

The way to be an overcomer is to touch the Lord himself every day. We cannot rely on the faith of yesterday, the prayer of yesterday. We must continue with Christ every day. We must lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us. Let us keep looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

We are made to fellowship and to commune with the Lord. It is the Lord's pleasure to spend time with his children. One day we will make our eternal home with him. The Lord will tabernacle with us.

Revelation 21:3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Right now we are standing at the cusp of the kingdom. The Lord Jesus is returning as a thief in the night to carry away his bride to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

After this we will return with him to take over this planet and we will reign and rule with Jesus for a thousand years. During this time the Lord will also call out another overcoming remnant out of the nations.

At the end of the thousand years Satan will be released and he will rally all of the unbelievers on the planet in his final assault upon Jesus and Jerusalem. He will fail again.

This time God himself will bring an end to all of this with fire. Satan and all unbelievers are cast into the lake of fire. God will then create a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. If you would like to read about all this check out the last several chapters of the book of Revelation.

Are we ready? Are we watching and praying, living an overcoming Christian life? Let us occupy until he returns! It won't be long now until the Lord returns to receive us unto himself that where he is we may be also.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

44. The Father

Everything Jesus said and did was because of his Father. When Jesus was only a child his parents found him in the temple. They were upset because he was missing for several days.

His reply shows the definition and rule by which Jesus lived his entire earthly life. **"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)**

Jesus was keenly aware of the presence of his Father in everything he said and did. Jesus told his disciples if they had seen him they had seen the Father.

There is a lot we can say about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is clear God is three in one. There is one God who has revealed himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is prophet, priest, and king. God is Israel, church, and the kingdom. We can see all of this within the Ark of the Covenant. (**Hebrews 9:4**)

We do not see as much development of God three in one in the Old Testament as much as we do in the New Testament. A good place to see an example of the three in one is when God created man in Genesis. He said, Let us make man in our image.

There are false teachings out there that deny God is three in one. They either deny the triune God outright or they turn God into someone who transforms from one person into another. They say God was the Father, became the Son, and is now the Spirit. None of this is accurate bible teaching.

God's people are also three in one. God's people are expressed through Israel, church, and the kingdom. In each of these, however, there is only a true spiritual remnant. It is the spiritual remnant in each of these three that is the one people of God. These are people who are of the faith of Abraham who saw the Lord Jesus and rejoiced.

In each of the three days of God (Israel, church, and the kingdom), the Lord expresses himself to the world through certain roles. He presents himself in Israel as a prophet. He presents himself in the church as a priest who intercedes in the power of the Holy Spirit. He also presents himself on the third day as King of the nations. Each day parallels a particular role which God uses to express himself. In each of these days here is also a specific outward or external organization expressing the presence of God on the earth. This outward

expression on day one was Israel. The outward expression on day two is the church. The outward expression on day three is the kingdom.

In each of these days we see the individual people occupying roles which reflect the nature of God. On day one we see prophets, priests, and kings. On day two we see prophets and priests. On day three we see the king and we will reign with him on that day.

On the third day God has a special plan for the nations on earth. People will be taught true spiritual government and authority. We will forget this satanic world system which we live in now.

45. Fellowship With The Father

It is evident Jesus had a close relationship with his Father. Jesus in every way was the only begotten Son of God who became the Firstborn among many brethren.

This close relationship with the Father is what we are made for and designed to experience. The Father desires to have a close relationship with us.

When Adam and Eve were first created and before their fall into sin they enjoyed this daily fellowship with the Lord in the garden of Eden. The Lord came in the evening and communed with them in the cool of the day. The Lord fulfilled all of their needs. They did not need anything outside of the presence of the Lord. This is what the Lord desires to be for his people. He desires to be our provision, our protection, and our prize. It is the goal and purpose of the Lord that we move into a place where God is everything for us.

Communion and fellowship with Jesus every day delivers us from meeting soul and body needs in the world system. As we enjoy fellowship with the Lord Jesus we will not be driven to fill or satisfy our soul with what the world offers.

The spirit that is in the world does not give satisfaction. It gives enough happiness to last for a moment, but then leaves us with an even greater hunger for more and more. This is addiction.

How do we find God's will for our life? We need to be in constant fellowship with our heavenly Father. God desires us to find his will for our lives. (**Romans 12:1-2**).

46. The Will Of The Father

The Lord Jesus had only one goal and purpose and that was obedience to the Father's will.

John 6:40, "And this is the will of him that sent me that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

God's will for Jesus was to bring eternal life to all who would believe in him. Jesus accomplished this by offering himself as the Lamb of God at Calvary. Jesus paid for all of our sins on the cross. He was crucified, he died, and he was buried. On the third day Jesus arose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is even now at the right hand of God making

intercession for us. One day he will return to this planet in body to receive us unto himself that where he is we may be also.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This is the hope of every born again, Spirit filled Christian. This is our goal and purpose - to be with the Lord. Absent from the body and present with the Lord. Paul desired to depart and to be with the Lord.

Jesus describes in a parable in Luke 15 the will of the heavenly Father. It is God's will that every person come to repentance and faith in Jesus. It is not God's will that any should perish, but that all would repent and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Luke 15 Jesus gives us the parable of the prodigal son. The son took his inheritance from the Father and squandered it all in riotous living. Then a famine came and this prodigal son found himself in a situation where he was so hungry he was willing to eat pig slop. At this low point the prodigal son suddenly came to his senses and realized that even the servants in his father's house lived better than this.

The prodigal son knew what he had to do. He went back home. He was in a foreign country so it would take a while to get back but one step after another he headed back home.

At a certain point the father saw his prodigal returning home. This implies the father was out there looking for him as well. The same is true of our loving heavenly Father. He is out there searching for us.

Before the son was all the way back the father went running out to him and wrapped his arms of love around him.

This is what I felt when I came to the Lord. When I finally gave up and surrendered I felt the warm arms of God's love envelope me. He puts on us a robe of righteousness. He puts his ring on our finger. He makes us his own.

There is rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents and turns to the Lord.

What is the Father's will? Jesus said it is the Father's will everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus receives eternal life. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

It is not God's will for men to perish. **2 Peter 3:9, "...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."**

Romans 2:4, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

47. Father Speaks

John 8:26, "I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."

We know God spoke to men throughout scripture. He spoke to Adam and Eve. We have a conversation God had with Cain and with Satan recorded. God spoke to Abraham, Moses, and Samuel.

It is important for us to believe the Father speaks. He spoke and the world was created. He spoke his word, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has also given us a written record of his words in the Bible.

God speaks and he makes himself known to us. He can speak in an audible voice. He can also speak to us in visions, dreams, and revelations.

When Jesus spoke, he was speaking God's word. **John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."**

When men stand up to preach God's word they should do that. Preaching should not be an opportunity to satisfy the flesh in getting a crowd to laugh, or like us, or pat us on the back. It is an opportunity to speak God's word which gives people spiritual life and revival.

I'm sure it is the enemy's goal to dilute the preaching of God's word, or to put men into these church positions who do not truly love the truth or God's word.

Men who take upon themselves this job of preaching God's word but do not preach God's word are in a fearful situation.

It is refreshing to hear a man who preaches from God's word and his words match God's spirit. His life of consecration can be felt through his words, and God's word comes forth with anointing and power to divide spirit and soul, joints and marrow, judging the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

The Father speaks. A man cannot even come to faith in the Lord Jesus unless the Father is speaking to him. No man can come to Jesus except by the work of the Father. And no man can come to the Father except through the Son of God. This is God's work from first to last.

48. The Father Works

John 5:17, "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

There was a definite pattern in the ministry of Jesus where he did miracles purposely on the Sabbath day. He also led his disciples to do things like harvesting corn on the sabbath in violation of the man made traditions on sabbath keeping.

I find it ironic there are so many false teachers and ministries today which are trying to lead people back into bondage to these religious ordinances, especially in regard to sabbath keeping.

Jesus intentionally did these activities on the sabbath to make a point. I'm sure Jesus foresaw the many false gospels and churches which would promote this sabbath bondage.

Man looks at time from the perspective of a seven day week. Man-made religions always bring men into bondage by enslaving people into the observance of days, holidays, and religious rules.

Anytime someone starts preaching sabbath I know right away they are preaching a false gospel and a false Jesus and a false Spirit.

When the Jewish people confronted Jesus on this point of working on the sabbath Jesus made it very clear his arrival was the fulfillment of these ordinances. Our day of rest is now the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men who are observing the sabbath do not understand who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

The reply Jesus gave their accusations was that he would always be working just as his Father was always working. This infuriated those religious leaders.

Why did this make them so mad? One reason is because it meant they could not control Jesus. It meant he was doing away with their religious system and rules. In other words, he was a threat to their jobs and money. They made money off controlling people with their religious laws and rules.

The same is true today. Men who preach God's law for Christians are ignorant at best, and might be evil at worst. Regardless, these systems are designed to destroy man's spirit and bring a man into bondage.

Colossians 2:16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days".

We need to realize completely that Jesus fulfilled everything in the Old Testament, including all of the Ten Commandments. When a Christian fulfills a commandment such as "honor your parents", he does not do so because he is trying to obey the ten commandments. Instead, the true Christian fulfills this commandment because he loves the Lord Jesus Christ and is filled with the Holy Spirit. We are not under the law, but the law is fulfilled in our lives as a result of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not under law anymore. We are under Christ. Christ Jesus will not send us back to Judaism or Hebrew roots. Think about how often Jesus rebuked the religious leaders. Think

about how hard Paul fought against religious people who were trying to lead new Christians into Judaism or obedience to religious ordinances.

Jesus is my sabbath day. I have entered into the rest of the sabbath day by my faith in Jesus Christ and I will not be brought into bondage by observing special days, holidays, or sabbath days.

49. The Voice Of The Father

2 Peter 1:17-18

Peter is describing a time men heard the voice of the Father from heaven. Another time was when Jesus was baptized a voice from heaven spoke as well.

As usual Peter was the one who spoke up for the other disciples. He saw Elijah and Moses were talking with the Lord Jesus. He offered to make a tent for each one of them. What was he thinking? God the Father then speaks and he makes sure everyone knows that Jesus is exalted above Moses and Elijah. These were just men. But Jesus was no ordinary man. Jesus is the Son of God.

In other examples in the gospels as well we see the Father is speaking to people and revealing truth to them. When Peter declared Jesus is the Christ the Lord said Peter knew this only because it was revealed to Peter by the heavenly Father.

When Jesus was baptized in Mark chapter 1 we see the Father spoke in verse 11, "**And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**"

I believe every Christian should pray and seek God that they will hear the Father's voice. I believe God expects us to be able to hear his voice. Jesus said he was the shepherd and his sheep heard his voice and followed him. You have to wonder about all these people who claim to be Christians but are following the voice of the stranger and the hireling. We need to pray for a love for truth, and the gift of discerning spirits. There are many seducing spirits and spirit voices clamoring in the world today. We need to be shut in with God in our prayer closet and learn to hear the voice of the heavenly Father.

50. Our Father In Heaven

Matthew 6:9, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name."

John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil.."

There are two different fathers. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to the Father in heaven and whose name is to be revered and worshiped.

There is another kind of father who is in the world, and this one is the devil. Anyone who is not a born again Spirit filled Christian is a child of the devil.

Ephesians 2:2, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

We see here clearly everyone who is not a Christian has the spirit of the devil working in them and through them. Unbelievers are controlled by the poison of the Serpent which flows through the veins of every fallen human man, woman, and child.

To underline this principle even further we have this verse in **1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."**

It is difficult to comprehend this: every single person who is not a Christian is a puppet in the hands of the devil.

Not only this, but it seems even Christians can sometimes be overwhelmed by the enemy and they can say and do things which are of the devil.

Just a couple verses after Peter had a revelation from the Father on who Jesus is, the Lord Jesus has to rebuke him for allowing Satan to influence him.

Matthew 16:23, "But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

This is an example of how the enemy can influence Christians and deceive them.

We need to pray always to our heavenly Father in the name of Jesus. There is a counterfeit, evil father who prowls around deceiving people and devouring those he can.

Our Father is in heaven. No one has seen the Father except the Son. Jesus says that if we have seen him we have seen the Father.

Jesus is one with the Father in purpose, goal, heart, desire, and essence. Jesus and the Father are one. Israel and the church are one in a similar way. God is three in one: Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Prophet, Priest, King; Israel, Church, and the Kingdom.

Jesus taught us to pray to our Father who is in heaven. Our Father desires this fellowship and communion with his children. We were created and made to fellowship, commune, and to worship the Father. Amen.

We can have confidence and approach the throne of grace where we can receive grace and mercy to help us in time of need.

The Lord encourages us to continue to pray and not to faint. Paul writes in **1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing."**

This work of prayer and intercession is what we are called to. Especially now in these last days when there is such a tremendous spiritual battle taking place.

51. One Way To The Father

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me." (John 14:6)

The Lord Jesus is the exclusive way which we must take to approach God the Father. This is the straight and the narrow way. There is only one way to God, and this way is the Lord Jesus. No other way exists for us to approach God the Father.

This teaching that Jesus is the only way is attacked and it is hated by the world of unbelievers and false brethren. They will not and indeed cannot submit to God because they refuse to enter in the way which God has provided.

There is a specific order in the universe and in God's Kingdom. The foundation of God's order is the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 3:11, "For other foundation can no man lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

People try to exalt and magnify the names of men. I've noticed I hear a lot of these men's names and people love doctrines of men. But there is no other name but the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:10, "Be it known unto you all, I and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

No other name but the name of Jesus.

Philippians 2:9, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Many people have announced and proclaimed false gospels. They all come in their own name, even boasting of angelic visitations to lend authority to their messages of deception.

If any one teaches that Jesus is just one way among many ways to God they are from the devil.

One Way To The Father

John 10 has a lot about these other voices and other ways. Jesus exposes the gospel message of the enemy and who is behind these trap doors.

John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Jesus is the only way to the Father.

John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the father but by me."

52. Promise Of The Father

Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-5, "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Acts 2:39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise of the Father which Jesus spoke of was and is to this day the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the promise of the heavenly Father which Jesus told the apostles about and is also still telling us about unto this very day.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as a counselor and a comforter to Christians. The Holy Spirit brings to our memory everything which Jesus says in the word of God. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and also of judgment.

For me it is usually easy to tell the difference between a Christian who has only been baptized in water and a Christian who is baptized in the Holy Spirit as well. One person takes the name of Christ; the other person lives Christ himself. One person is preoccupied with Bible truth; the other person has the truth living and breathing through them.

It is a huge difference when a Christian is baptized in the Holy Ghost. They no longer belong to themselves anymore. They live and move and have their life in the Lord Jesus.

It is important to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul writes this in Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is a real person. He is one of the three persons who comprise God himself: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is a real person. He can think, he has feelings, he can be grieved, he has a job, responsibilities, and takes actions.

Many people attempt to minimize the Lord Jesus and make him just another prophet. In the same way, people attempt to minimize the Holy Spirit and turn him into some kind of force or electricity. He is not an IT. He is a real person, just like Jesus and the Father are real people.

He teaches us, guides us, speaks to us, gives us guidance, direction, and understanding. He reveals the Lord Jesus Christ to us. He shows us things which are to come.

53. The Father Knows The Day And The Hour

Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

In Matthew 24 Jesus describes the end of the world or the last days. Here Jesus is describing what will happen at the end of the age. The Lord will return to receive his elect unto himself.

Nobody knows when this will take place, except the Father in heaven.

People think because we don't know the day or the hour then this topic should not be studied or thought about.

I think, however, Christians should be studying this for several reasons.

One reason is because Jesus commands us to be watchful and to be ready. Christians should be living in view of the return of the Lord Jesus. Having the return of the Lord in our minds provides an eternal perspective. We are to live our lives here with our heart and mind upon the Kingdom of God. Paul said we are to set our mind on things above (**Colossians 3:1**)

Having the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus has a purifying effect upon us.

Not knowing when the Lord returns demands we live diligently, always living with our hearts and minds fixed on the Lord Jesus.

Christians who do not consider the return of the Lord may suffer from deception, and have their priorities mixed up.

The Lord knows those who are his and let everyone who names Christ depart from iniquity.

Another point to consider with this is that if Jesus says only the Father knows when this day happens then he is also confirming and underlining the reality of the day of the Lord. He is saying there is a fixed date upon which everything will be wrapped up.

The world will not go on forever like it is right now. Eventually the Lord Jesus is returning. There will be a judgment day. The wicked will be punished. The righteous will be rewarded. There will be a kingdom of the Lord on this earth for a thousand years. There will be a new heavens and a new earth. There will be a city coming down out of heaven from God. These events are certain to happen.

In view of these events, how should I live?

54. Submitting To The Father's Will

There is a war between the flesh and the spirit. Jesus said "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". In Paul's battle between the flesh and the Spirit in **Romans 7** he cried out, "**Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (verse 24).**

What is the answer?

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (verse 25).

Everything is given to us through the Lord Jesus. We have forgiveness of sins, deliverance from self, sin, the world, and victory over the devil, death, and hell. All of this has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus. We enter into the Lord's victory by faith. "**Who is he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:5)**

When Jesus was in the garden he prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done".

There are times when our will crosses the will of the heavenly Father. We have to make a decision. Jesus made a decision in the garden to obey the heavenly Father's will. He prayed, "not my will, but thine, be done".

Does it seem strange that Jesus had a will he had to submit to his Father? After all, Jesus was also a man. He had the will, the soul, of a man. Thus it was necessary for him to relinquish his will, and to commit himself into the hands of his Father.

1 Peter 2:23, "..but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously".

We need to actively seek God to discover his will, to submit ourselves to God's will, and to obey God's will for our lives.

Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God".

It is the goal of the Christian to find God's will, to submit our will to his will, and to obey his will in our everyday life situations. Each day we are to prove God's good, acceptable, and perfect will for our lives.

One aspect of God's will is that we not be conformed to the world, but instead we be conformed to the image of his Son.

Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren".

This is more than human striving after character qualities. We can list all the fruits of the Spirit, define each of them, and set goals to apply it to our lives. But this does not make us conform to the image of the Son.

There is only one way to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This is by seeing him. We must behold the Lamb of God. We must truly receive revelation knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be changed into his likeness. There is no other way except by the work of God's grace enlightening the eyes of our heart that we know him.

Without this revelation from the Father, we can never know who the Son of God truly is. We can only come to Jesus when the Father gives us light in our spirit, when we are born again of the Spirit of God.

God makes his home with us. We live in him, and make our home in his presence.

It is the desire of the sons of God to live in his presence. And we shall be with him soon. We shall put off this old creation, and we shall be swallowed up in his life. Amen.

55. The Name Of The Father

In **John 17** Jesus prays to the heavenly Father. He reveals in this prayer he kept his disciples in the name of the Father. He also prays that after he departs to go to the Father that they will continue to be kept in the Father's name.

Names in the Bible reveal the character of a man. God revealed himself to Moses as "I am that I am". Jesus submitted himself to his Father completely. Everything he did was in the name of the Father. It is interesting to read the gospels and see how many times Jesus said he worked, did miracles, spoke, taught, and lived in the name of his Father. Jesus was so completely in step with the heavenly Father he could say, "I and the Father are one" and "if you have seen me you've seen the Father".

The closer Jesus got to the end of his earthly ministry he began to teach his disciples they would pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. While he was on earth he kept them in the name of the Father.

Just as Jesus submitted to his Father, we also submit to the Father in the name of Jesus. Jesus is the firstborn of many brothers. We are his brothers as we abide in him.

A Christian takes the name of Christ. He denies his own name. The Lord promised in **Revelation 3:12** the overcomer has the name of the Father, the name of the city of God, and also the name of Jesus written upon him. He belongs totally and completely to God. Also, **Revelation 2:17** describes the overcomer receiving a white stone with a new name written on it. These are names given to the overcomer by the Lord.

A Christian does not make a name for himself. He trusts in God to give him a name and waits upon the Lord for his name.

The name of the Father gave Jesus the authority of the kingdom. The overcomer is given kingdom authority as well (**Revelation 2:17; 2:26-27; 3:21**).

The hidden manna is kingdom authority. Receiving a name from God means this believer successfully denied his own name and lived instead for Jesus.

All of this is accomplished by faith in the finished work of Christ. We are not able to do anything ourselves. The work of God is this: believe in the one whom the Father sent. Amen.

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